



**DOWN **  
**CHANNEL IN**  
**THE "VIVETTE"**

**E. Keble Chatterton**

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“VIVETTE”



W.H.

1910.

# DOWN CHANNEL IN THE "VIVETTE"

BY

E. KEBLE CHATTERTON

With a Frontispiece in Colour  
and Fifty Illustrations  
by Norman S. Carr



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## PREFACE

**M**OST of the best logs remain unprinted. I heard the other day of the cruise of a small yacht, whose dimensions are such that she would make a nice, convenient-sized craft for sailing about on the Serpentine. She went away from her home port for her annual summer outing, and came back after some weeks. All the time she was sailed entirely single-handed, with only her owner aboard. When she returned some one asked him where he had been. He answered that he had been down the Channel, round Land's End, and across to Ireland.

"Have any adventures?" inquired his friend.

"No — just ordinary cruising."

"How did you get on in the Irish Channel? Plenty of wind?"

"Yes, plenty of wind."

"How long were you crossing?"

"Oh — not a quick passage. You see," he explained reluctantly, "I was hove-to for two days during that breeze — you remember?"

That is the type of yachtsman — and there are many of them — who would as soon think of publishing their logs as of publishing their private diaries. It is a justifiable question for the reader who takes up the present book to ask: "Then, why do you not follow so excellent an example when you have done less than they?" I answer that, lacking the essential modesty which characterises these splendid sailor-men, I have dared to rush into print where angelic yachtsmen fear to tread, in the hope that they may be induced to spin their much better yarns for the interest and benefit of the least adventurous. Good wine needs no bush, but a good yarn does need publicity: otherwise it dies with the man, and his interesting exploits are buried with him. There is not a supply of these published logs sufficient to meet the demands of most sailing men, who enjoy nothing better than to read the experiences of other amateur sea-farers. Of course there is the Superior Person in the yacht club as there is everywhere else, and to him I know that this little book can make no appeal. But I venture to hope that those others with whom I enjoy a similarity of tastes, and a sympathetic interest in the matters which are herewith recorded, may find some little pleasure in reading what I have set forth. At least, perhaps, they may find some pleasure in glancing at the illustrations, for the making of which I have again to thank my friend and cruising-mate, Mr. Norman S. Carr.

*May 1910.*

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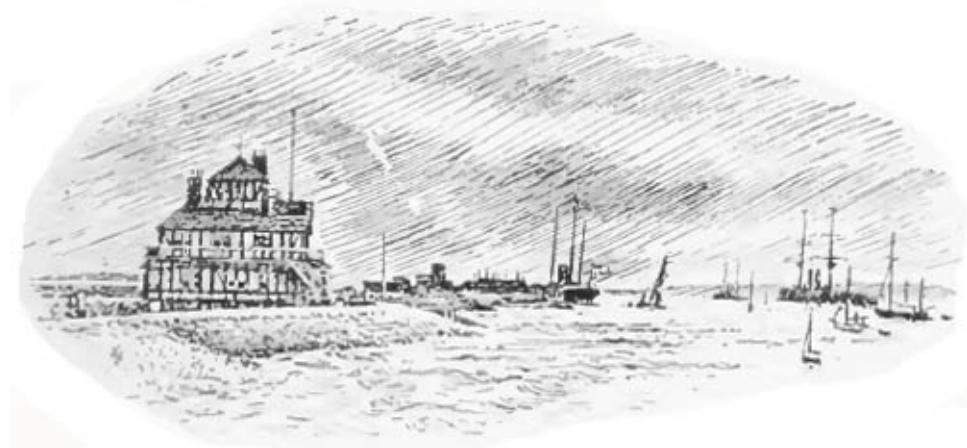
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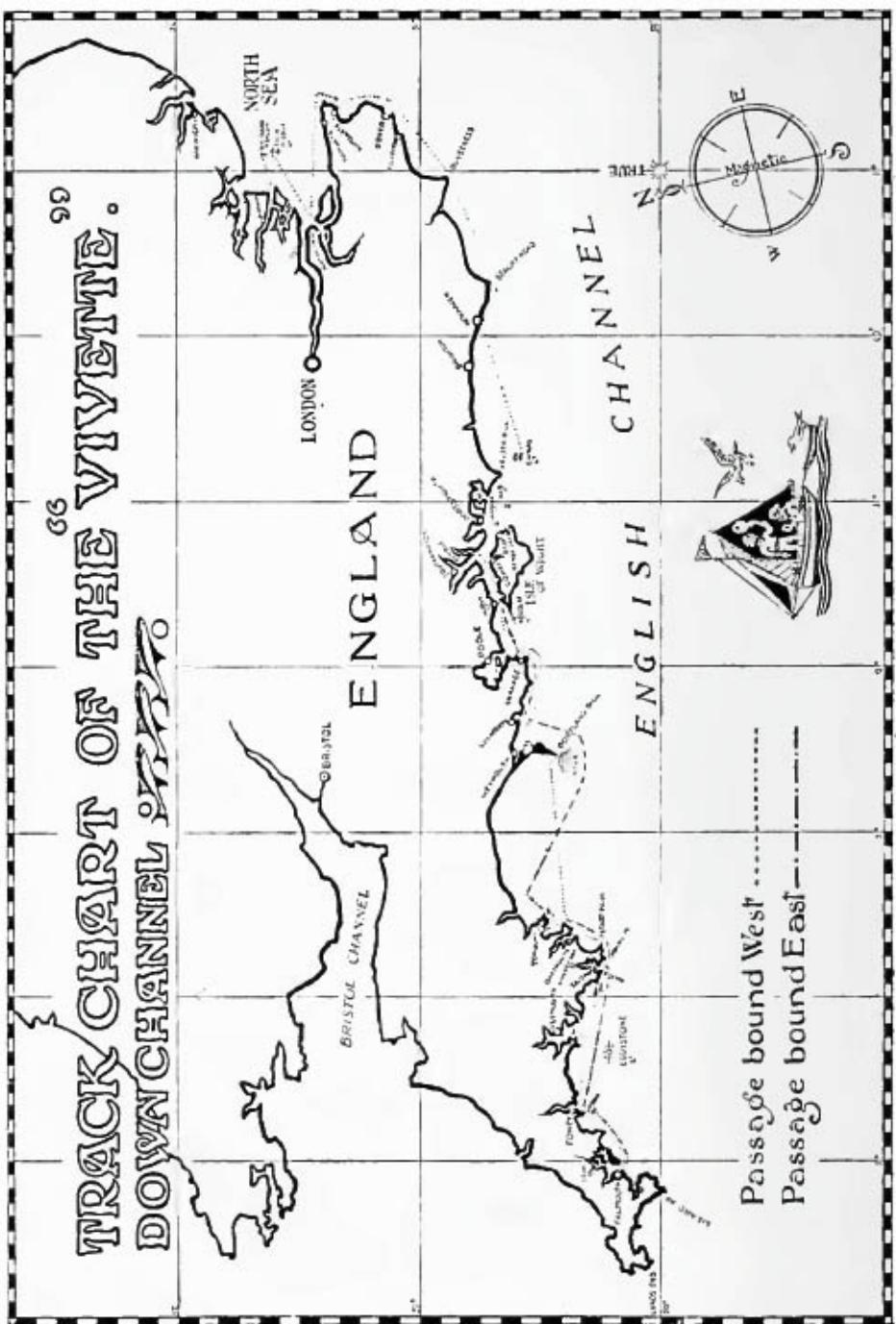
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## INTRODUCTION

WE had come in from the open sea, which all the day had been doing its utmost to make itself just as trying and difficult to live with as ever. With every one of our four reefs tucked in to the mainsail, and nothing but a spitfire of a jib at the end of the bowsprit, we had rounded in between the high piers at the conclusion of our passage, and tied up in a snug corner of the sheltered harbour: for the next few days it was going to blow "some," and the seas would be far too treacherous for our little craft. As we lowered sail, a paid-hand on the next yacht anticipated our wish, and stood by to catch our line preparatory to making fast alongside the quay.

During the ensuing days we became great friends with our neighbour. His owner had left the yacht to go inland, so that the man was alone, and welcomed the arrival of a stranger as someone to talk to. It was not long before we discovered that he was different from the ordinary type of yacht's hand one meets sometimes up and down the coast, the product of having too little work to do and of receiving too much wages in return for the little that has to be done. There was something about this man which seemed to stamp him with a clearly-cut character of his own, and as we got to know each other better during the time that we were kept in port, while the wind blew across the harbour, and the angry, torn clouds scudded over the sky, he began gradually to unburden himself. It was then that we learnt that most of his life had been spent in deep-seasailing vessels, voyaging into every corner of the seven seas, round the Horn, the Cape, and elsewhere. He used to spin us yarns sometimes of those *real* experiences which can only be obtained on the old-fashioned sailing ship, but happen somehow differently on the steamer, even though she be but a rusty, ill-found tramp, painfully grinding out her miserable nine knots an hour.

One sunset, just before he went below and squeezed himself through the narrow forehatch into the kennel of a fok'sle, he halted, and turning round to me in a sudden spasm of confidence said—

"Look 'ere, sir, if I 'ad the chance I'd let the sea alone—that I would."

I looked at him and smiled, for I knew he was but exercising the sailor's historic privilege of grumbling.

"And if you did," I replied, "what then?"

"What then? Why, I'd go an' live in the country—right away from the coast; get a little bit of a place somewhere and a few cocks 'n 'ens, and I wouldn't want nothing else then. Oh, it's a dog's life going to sea," he growled despairingly.

Somehow he didn't meet with the sympathy he had expected, for—

"Well, supposing you did," I argued, "supposing you got your nice little place in the country, your garden and a few cocks and hens, how long do you think you'd tolerate it all?"

He didn't answer at first. Then—

"Oh—dunno," he muttered half audibly.

"You might stand it a few months, or you might have had enough in a few weeks," I submitted, "and all the time you'd be thinking not about your garden and your fowls—your mind would be away from the land right across to the sea—and before long you'd have given up the shore life, and gone back to look for a ship again."

He looked thoughtfully across the harbour for a minute, drew the back of his strong, brown hand over his mouth, and, resting his weight on his arms, leaned out on to the deck.

"Yes—well, I suppose you're about right," he agreed at length. "I can see myself doing it all over again. When I come home at the end of a voyage," he continued, "the first week's all right, an' so's the second. But after that, sir, it seems to get a bit old-fashioned like, and I've had enough. It's always the same everytime, and I'm thankful when my time's up. Seems a funny thing, but there it is," he concluded.<sup>1</sup>

Had he been a little more of a philosopher, this British sailor-man would have admitted that it was but the spirit of his fathers manifesting itself in him in spite of himself; the instinct of an island race, of the sons of the sea, that is every bit as truly existing to-day, though not as openly shown, as in the days of the Elizabethan seamen, and further back still to the times that followed after the coming of the Vikings to instil what we had yet to learn, but have never since lost, the fascination which is found in ships and the sea. For it is true enough that the professed object of those sixteenth-century sailors when they manned their capstans and unfurled their sails to go to sea was plainly and clearly to obtain wealth. They roamed the ocean expressly to catch the Spanish treasure frigates and relieve them of their valuable gold and silver and spices for the aggrandisement of themselves. But at the back of that sordid sense was the sea-sense, and many of the merchant-adventurers had in them less of the merchant and more of the adventurer. They were prompted by that restless force which is indescribable, and scarcely capable of analysis except on the supposition that it is the re-appearance of that part of human nature which is still linked most closely to the primitive man. Even in those for whom the sea has little or no attraction that same yearning comes out in a Selous, a Sven Hedin, or a Roosevelt. The ex-President of the United States in the first words of his account

relating his experiences in the heart of Central Africa, himself remarks that “the great world movement which began with the voyages of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, and has gone on with ever-increasing rapidity and complexity until our own time, has developed along a myriad lines of interest. In no way has it been more interesting than in the way in which it has resulted in bringing into sudden, violent, and intimate contact, phases of the world’s life-history which would be normally separated by untold centuries of slow development.”

Even to-day in this age of ultra-civilisation man feels that he must go forth and contend for something. Even if it is not for fortune, it is for fame or fun. That, surely, is the only way in which Arctic and Antarctic expeditions have had their birth. It is nothing less than a continuous war which has gone on uninterruptedly down the ages between man and the superior forces of Nature. He likes to strive in the contest and show his worth, if not to the satisfaction of the whole world, at least to those whose applause is to him the most acceptable. For nothing is so gratifying to the weak as to be able to attain even a temporary triumph over a greater power. The woman, who knows she is in strength, at least, the inferior of the man, exults in achieving some little thing in which the other sex has not succeeded. And so man puts out to sea to wrestle with waves that could swallow him up any moment, with winds that can blow him miles from his course, with tides that can cast him and his ship helpless on to sand or coral. It is in the full knowledge and realisation of these potentialities that he delights to match his weakness and limited power. He goes out because he has in mind the coming back—the joy of having dodged his enemy, outwitted him not by superiority of power, but by skilfulness of strategy: he knows he is weak, and yet he is strong in resource.

But to-day there is so little of the world to be explored; there are so very few shores of the sea that have not seen man and his ships go past. There are but a handful of pirates anywhere, and perhaps, like the diminishing wild animals of Central Africa, they will soon be protected from being chased, and preserved as curiosities to wander as they please within certain limits. We cannot, like the Elizabethans, go out to capture a *Madre de Dios* and bring her into Dartmouth harbour with her rich spoil: International Law has tamed us too much to do that. But though we cannot all be Scotts or Shackletons, or Pearys or Nansens, yet we keep that spirit alive in a smaller way by sending our whalers out for many months in the year, and in despatching the fine, daring fishermen in their able vessels from Brixham, Yarmouth, and elsewhere to find their way through fogs and gales in order to gather the harvest of the sea. And, in a manner smaller still, this primitive instinct is kept from being extinguished utterly by the yachtsmen, fettered to the city as they are for most of the year, who break their irksome

bonds and hurry to the coast to match their town-bred weakness and amateur skill against the tyranny of the Narrow Seas.

In the extremely kind and favourable reviews which greeted the publication of my “Sailing Ships and their Story,” some of the critics in applauding what they were pleased to call the writer’s “passion for the sea” referred to this as being a virtue that is rare among our fellow-countrymen. But whilst I take advantage of this opportunity to express my thanks for the generous reception which my efforts received, I cannot allow the last remark to pass unchallenged. To do so would be to acquiesce in an injustice dealt to those hundreds of amateur sailing men who are now found coasting along our shores in almost every part of our isles. In them the old Elizabethan spirit is displayed every weekend: in them the fascination of the sea has an overwhelming influence, and it is these enthusiasts who keep alive much of the original “passion for the sea,” and the old seamanship which is destined to be swept away by the coming of the steamer and motor craft.

Ever since the close of the Crimean War the custom of doing on the sea for sport what others are doing for their livelihood has been obtaining a strong hold over men who saw in all other recreations a limit too close and a freedom from danger too clearly defined; so that now there is scarcely a port or an estuary in the kingdom which has not its flourishing sailing or yacht club with a membership of keen, eager sailing men. For some time the queen of sports was confined to those who alone possessed the income of a monarch. Up till the ‘seventies it was almost exclusively the recreation of the rich, and not till after the ‘eighties was room made for the poor man and his small yacht. By the end of the last century, however, he had proved that to be a good sea-sportsman it was not essential that his ship should carry a large crew, nor in fact any crew at all save himself and his friends. And by now the Corinthian sailor, profiting by the experience of others, knows that apart from the freedom of expense which he enjoys in working his vessel with an amateur crew, he is learning all the time something which he would have taken far longer to acquire under constant tutelage—that feeling of self-reliance and cool confidence in making his little voyages down the Narrow Seas. Side by side with this new enthusiasm was growing up ready to meet it a fuller knowledge and more scientific study of the architecture of small yachts, so that now, at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the small yacht-owner is able to put to sea in a craft that is proportionately as well built and designed as those bigger and more aristocratic sisters carrying their gold-laced skippers and innumerable hands to do the work on board them.

The following pages, then, contain a faithful record of a cruise from one end

of the English Channel to the other in as small a vessel as most people, perhaps, would care to embark on for such a voyage. No claim, however, is made that anything in the least wonderful was achieved thereby. Vessels as small as *Vivette* have even crossed the Atlantic, and the famous little *Tillikum*, in which Captain Voss sailed around the world, is nothing more than a decked dug-out. The first part of the cruise appeared in two numbers of *The Yachting Monthly*, and has since been revised and largely re-written. But sailors, yachtsmen, and others, some of whom were complete strangers to me, have asked for more, so that it has seemed desirable to publish in an improved and more permanent form what has gone before, with the addition of the completion of the cruise which was made the following year. The publication of yachtsmen's logs is of only recent date, but most members of this sport find that their voracious appetite is not satiated by the few which make their appearance at rare intervals. There is a keen delight in reading of the adventures which greeted a fellow-sports-man, and in learning how an exit was made from an exciting difficulty. Apart from the mild thrill which is to be obtained by following another's exploits, there results sometimes an addition of knowledge based on the experiences and experiments which others have made in their effort to contend with the great forces of Nature. There are some yachtsmen, too, who find their enjoyment almost exclusively in going in and out of their own port without troubling to follow the coast past the next headland. But there is so much fresh pleasure in finding a new anchorage every night, in entering new harbours and estuaries, in negotiating other channels, that it is hoped the following narrative may tempt them to break from their tradition, leave their moorings, and see other corners of this fair isle of Albion.

Nevertheless, it is not exclusively for the yachtsman that this record has been written. The success of the travel book within the last two or three years has shown conclusively that there is a large public among the class known usually as the general reader, that prefers to do its voyaging vicariously without having to stir outside the four walls of the room. Perhaps to these there may be some pleasure in seeing with the author the coast-line of the English Channel, not, as is usual, from the land side, but from the sea, as Caesar saw it, and the Vikings, and Phoenicians, the French, the Dutch, the Spanish Armada, and other invaders of our shores have seen it. The holiday-maker who is set down at the end of a long journey through the country at a seaside town knows nothing of the continuity of his country's coast-line. Beyond the two headlands that bound the bay he knows that land and sea stretch away until the next port is reached. But of the unceasing panorama, changing every minute as you fly on before the wind, of the succession of lighthouses and lightships, cliffs and ravines, of beautiful

and peaceful red-tiled villages nestling under the shelter of a craggy mountain, of fields yellow with harvest abutting on to the sea, of creeks harbouring a few weather-worn fishing-boats, of the multifarious line of shipping that passes you by day and by night, he has only a vague and disjointed notion.

To the stay-at-home, then, I hope that I shall succeed in presenting a new picture to his imagination; to the yachtsman accustomed to sail only in his own home waters I trust I shall hold out a temptation to cruise farther along; in those who have already been down Channel perhaps I may awake happy memories; while to none I trust I shall seem wearisome in recounting one of the most interesting and attractive forms of travel which can be obtained without needing the assistance of a comfortable train, a luxurious liner, or a high-powered motor-car.

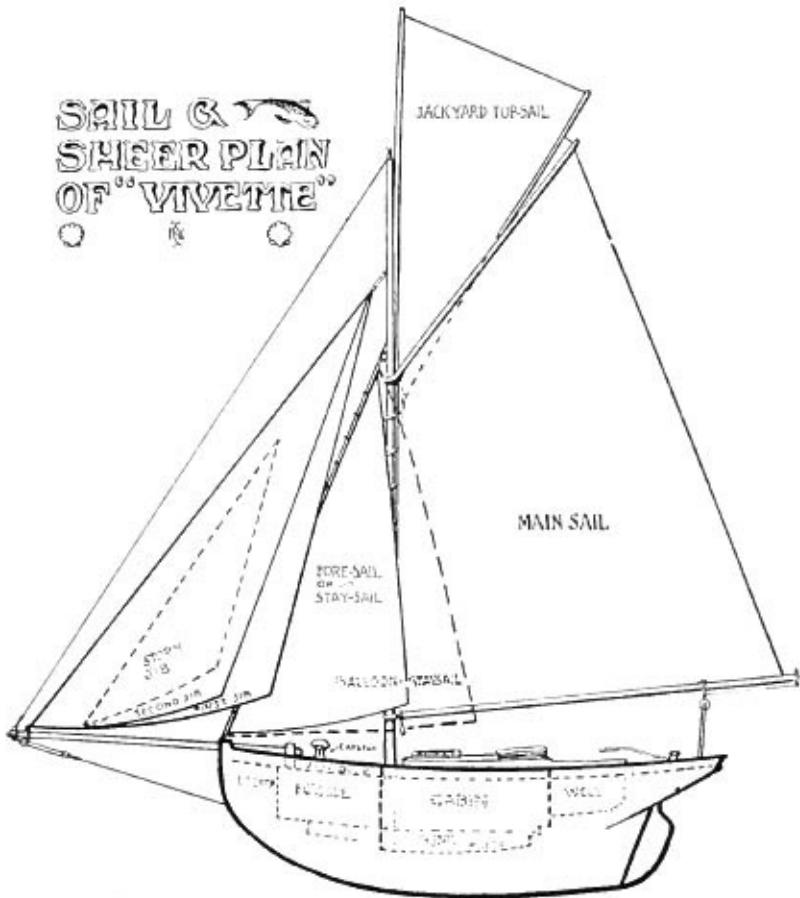
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<sup>1</sup> The sensationalism of coincidence is remarkable. I had not seen or heard anything of this yacht or its paid-hand for nearly eighteen months when, the morning after the above words had been written, the following significant intelligence was published from Lloyd's:—

“\_\_\_\_ (6-tons), of\_\_\_\_, sank after being on fire in the Downs last night. Crew of three men, including her owner, were saved by the North Deal lifeboat, and landed at Ramsgate this morning.”

I can see my friend clambering out of the sinking yacht into the lifeboat, and murmuring to himself again, in his own quiet way, something about a “dog’s life” and “letting the sea alone.” But I wonder now whether he is any nearer to his country ideal, or whether, by the time these lines are in print, he has signed on again aboard a big ship and “gone foreign”—“right away from the coast”?

SAIL &  
SHEER PLAN  
OF "VIVETTE"



# DOWN CHANNEL IN THE VIVETTE

## CHAPTER I

### FROM THE CROUCH TO THE MEDWAY

DURING the long, sad winter *Vivette* had been hauled out of the water and sheltered from the weather, while a good many improvements and repairs were made in order that when the spring came round again she might be fit and strong to carry her crew of two, with such comfort as can be found on board a four-tonner, from one end of the narrow seas to the other.

Finally, one bright May morning, with her new mast stepped, her rigging all in place, her sails tanned (excepting, of course, the balloon canvas, which preserves its original purity), with her ballast clean, freshly painted, and stowed in position below the floor boards, and with new running gear and everything ship-shape and "Bristol-fashion," *Vivette*'s white top-sides and varnish glistened gaily in the sunshine. She was ready to begin her voyage down west and to show how bravely she could contend with the waves and tides and winds which would assail her before the end of the journey had been reached. But in order to make a test of her gear, and to make sure that nothing was still wanting, a preliminary sail was taken at the week-end; and a few days later, letting go the mooring-buoy into the Crouch, *Vivette* sped on away to the open sea, leaving Burnham and the dreary Essex flats astern. As we go down with the strong tide and light wind, let me explain a little more fully the nature of the ship and her equipment.



GETTING UNDER WEIGH  
Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex

*Vivette* had been designed and built by Messrs. E. J. & W. Goldsmith, Ltd., the well-known firm of barge builders of Grays, Essex, and many a sailor-man, amateur and professional, has since admired alike the strength and generous amount of wood that was put into her. For some years, under her previous ownership, she was well known cruising up and down the east coast, but my thoughts turned westwards to the fascinating waters of the Wight, the bold cliffs of Dorset, the deep coves and creeks of Devon and Cornwall. I wanted, therefore, a vessel of such a design and build that could be managed alone, if necessary, without the burden and nuisance of a paid-hand; she must be comely in appearance, with plenty of freeboard, and a nice comfortable little cabin below. Primarily she was to be a good bad-weather craft, with the best possible speed that could be obtained when the other conditions had been fulfilled. She was not to be a flier, but a wholesome cruiser, so that if caught in a blow she would render a good account of herself. In every respect *Vivette* satisfied my requirements. The value of carrying a considerable amount of internal ballast, after the fashion of the famous Bristol Channel pilot-boats, instead of having it all on the keel, was proved over and over again down Channel. A bulb-keeled boat would have possibly gone through some of the weather we had with an increase of speed, but she would have been far less habitable, and at the same time far wetter. Cruising for weeks on a small vessel like ours, with only two all told aboard, doing day and night passages along the coast, watching out for a sudden change of weather, keeping careful compass courses and attending to the navigation of bays and channels, reefing and setting sail, getting up or laying out anchors, cooking and sketching or doing a hundred odd jobs whilst being tumbled about by the uncertainty of the sea, make a serious strain on the physical endurance of even the strongest and keenest of us. Every little thing, therefore, that tends to the increased comfort of the crew of a small vessel and is a saving in labour cannot be lightly dispensed with. Although *Vivette* was surprisingly fast, yet she had a full-bodied design that materially assisted her stability, even if it somewhat retarded her speed. Only twenty-five feet over all and twenty-one feet on the waterline, she measures an extreme beam of seven and a half feet, being thus rather more than three beams to her length. Her draught of four feet three inches enables her to get a good grip on the water, yet to enter many snug little creeks which would be impossible to deeper-draught vessels. It means, too, that in bad weather a slightly more sheltered anchorage can often be obtained by going a little farther into the land, and it permits of one navigating channels, having only a fathom, with full confidence, except in very disturbed weather.

Her planking is of yellow pine, an inch and a quarter thick, while her timbers

are of American elm, an inch and an inch and a half in thickness. The keel, also, is of elm, but the stem and stern-post are of English oak. She carries two tons of lead on her keel, while inside she has about another ton of ballast. Her appearance forward shows a cut-away bow with steep sides, a somewhat full-bodied midship section below the waterline with a decidedly pretty entrance, and the short elliptical counter which the intrepid M'Mullen adopted in his *Orion*, and is so frequently seen to-day on some of the coasters which come into the Mersey from the Irish Sea. To have had the long, overhanging counter that one sees on some of the pretty toys of the Solent would have been utterly out of place both in a following sea (giving it an opportunity of lifting the stern up and depressing the bows) and in occasions when, pitching fore and aft in the trough of the Channel, the stern comes down with an alarming crash on to the wave. Experience has taught one that for weatherliness the so-called canoe-stern is hard to beat, but the counter is far superior in appearance. The elliptical stern, therefore, as in *Vivette*, forms a happy compromise.

To describe a vessel by her tonnage is scarcely less deceptive than it was in mediaeval times. *Vivette* is only four tons according to Thames measurement, but her accommodation below is the equivalent of many seven-tonners. She has a cabin-top which is only a few inches above the gunwale, giving four and a half feet of head-room below, and in such a way that one can sit up in comfort under the decks, a possibility that is frequently missing in craft of even larger tonnage. Below the bunks, which are on either side, there is plenty of room for stores, while as you enter down the companion at the stern large roomy cupboards face each other capable of stowing more than enough provisions for two people for over a week. Above the cupboards are side-boards for books and navigation instruments, and higher still are racks for drinking glasses and odds and ends. Outside in the well, and underneath the seats, are the tanks for the fresh water, holding of sufficient for two men for three to four days, including an adequate supply for washing. Thus, with her water and stores aboard, *Vivette*, in spite of her size, can keep the sea, totally independent of the shore, for at least three or four days, as we have proved in practice.

Before we come on deck let us point out the large locker at the extreme stern where a good forty-fathom warp and a light kedge are always in readiness for emergencies, together with a lightly shorter line for harbour work. All sorts of gear, such as a canvas sea-anchor, a sparepump in case the other should clog, tools, putty, oakum, marlin spikes, fog-horn, spare compass, and other items of her "furniture," are carried, besides spare blocks, marlin, and a host of those articles which accumulate year by year, and in spite of their uselessness become so dear to one's heart that one hesitates to throw them overboard as one ought. A

large, full-sized life-buoy is carried instead of one of those pretty little things so many small yachts have on board. It is a stupid mistake to suppose that the smaller the yacht the smaller should be the amount of buoyancy required for the support of her crew in the time of need. This buoy fixes on to the cabin hatch and keeps the chart in place, and is always ready for any serious emergency, which, I am thankful to say, we have never yet experienced. Forward, a handy little brass-domed capstan saves considerable labour in breaking out the anchor.

She carries a mainsail, topsail, staysail, and has three jibs, as well as trysail, spinnaker, and balloon staysail. The latter proved itself to be in suitable winds the most useful extra sail on board, and on many an occasion added at least a knot per hour to our speed. The mainsail is reefed with Turner's patent reefing gear, which, in spite of certain defects, is wonderfully handy; and the convenience of being able to reef down snug in a couple of minutes or less was appreciated over and over again. If the wind and sea suddenly get too much for us we stow the staysail, lashing it down so as not to blow loose again, and roll in as much of the mainsail as need be. The two fears that one always had were, first, lest the claw-ring should rip up the sail; secondly, lest the gear should give at the goose-neck. The reefing gear adopted by the Bristol Channel pilot-cutters is excellent, both as to the way in which it is made fast to the mast, and because of the abolition of the claw-ring, the sheet being attached to the extremity of the boom. The only drawback would seem to lie in the fact that the boom must be of such a length as not to project farther aft than the counter. There is also the additional possibility of the boom breaking because of the strain being nowhere in the middle, but confined to the end; and the introduction of this gear among the Bristol pilots has in fact led to more snapped spars than was previously the case.

The compass in *Vivette* is affixed to a wooden bracket which is on the starboard bulkhead in the well. When doing a passage this bracket can be slid out into the centre, but when in port it is pushed back out of the way. Reaching not quite up to the height of the cabin-top, it is protected to some extent from spray coming aboard, whilst at the same time it is high enough to allow us to take cross-bearings clear of interruption. Except in very short, choppy seas this compass was never too lively. After swinging the ship on several points I found that the greatest deviation did not exceed a quarter of a point, which is about the same amount of error expected on a torpedo-boat. For the most part I used Admiralty large scale charts, being careful always to have all courses carefully marked out the night before sailing from an anchorage or harbour. There are times, of course, when one has to modify one's plans owing to the variation of winds and tides, but any one who has tried to use his parallel rulers on the cabin

table of a small yacht when the little ship was trying to stand first on her head, then on her tail, knows that the operation of drawing only a straight line is not easy.

The shrouds of *Vivette* are made fast by means of rigging-screws, which enable one to tighten up in a few seconds, and do not need the attention which the old-fashioned rope lanyards require. At the same time the latter have the advantage of giving a little play to the rigging, which many authorities deem expedient when the ship is being pressed; and there is the further disadvantage to be taken into account in the case of rigging-screws, that the full strain comes on to the thread instead of elsewhere. Instances are not wanting of the thread being pulled right off and the rigging becoming useless to support the mast; and I know of one serious case which occurred while racing, and unless the yacht had been put about on the other tack her mast would have gone by the board. In order to counteract the possibility of such a catastrophe, when at length we had adjusted the rigging-screws to their proper extent we spliced on little wire lanyards, which in case of accident would have held until we were able to replace with spare rigging-screws carried ready in the boatswain's locker. Round the deck, extending from about midships, runs a wire life-line, stretched on brass stanchions. Besides adding considerably to our safety when moving about, it was most useful as affording something to lean against when sitting on deck.

From the stanchions two small brackets project, hollowed something like a rowlock, on which rest the spars not in use, such as the topsail-yard and dinghy mast. These are usually on the starboard side, while the long ash sweep is kept on the port deck. Forward two anchors are carried, whilst a lighter kedge is stowed in the after-locker.

Below in the cabin, immediately under the small companion, is the tap connecting with the water-tanks. Above the bunks canvas cots fold up, when not in use, against the side of the ship. At the forward end, on the port side, is a wardrobe, which is a great convenience for keeping dry one's shore-going clothes. Its door contains a cheval mirror, and reflects some of the light which comes through the skylight of the cabin. On the starboard side is a stove for heating the cabin in cold weather, and burns peat. Even during the so-called summer it was not without use sometimes, and dried our damp clothes in the absence of the sun that should have appeared. Thence a sliding door gives access into the forecastle, which contains a handy kitchen table coming out from the side for cutting up meat and for other uses connected with cooking. Opposite is room for another bunk in case of emergency, with lockers underneath for peat, &c.

Right forward is the lamp locker and oil room, while below is the chain

locker. All the cooking is done on a couple of Primus stoves, which as long as they are kept clean do excellent service. The ship's crockery fits into racks on the starboard side of the forecastle, and shelves are suitably placed to prevent the knives and forks from rolling on to the floor.



VIVETTE'S CABIN

Looking forward

With such an introduction to the ship and her accommodation, let us proceed on deck again as we find ourselves going down the Crouch and gradually nearing Foulness.

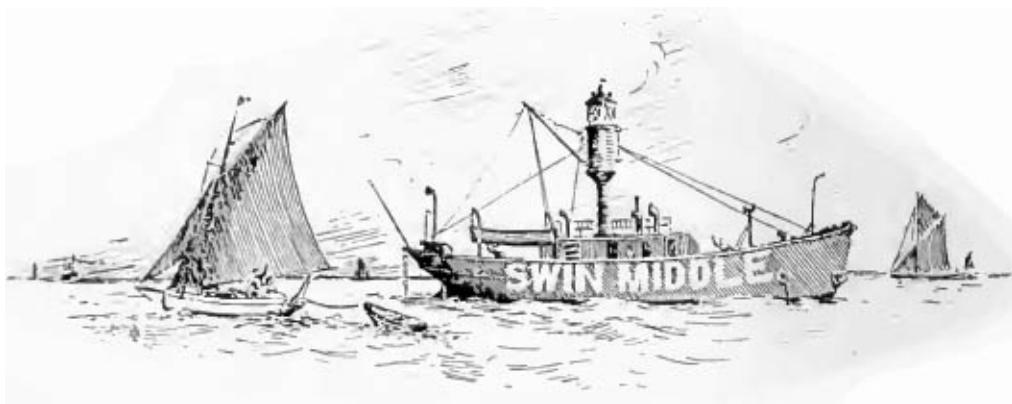
It was a curious, uncertain kind of weather that was hovering about. The

previous day had been squally, the sky had gone as black as ink, and a thunderstorm had vanished as quickly as it had come. On the morrow we were up betimes so as to start at high water, but unfortunately a fog hung heavily and obliterated everything within a few yards. But as soon as the ebb set in came a little breeze from the east yet very faint, going round presently to the south. We were informed that a tempest would probably follow. The wind eventually backed to the south-east, but before we had got clear of the river it had dropped, and we were becalmed off Holywell Point. By half-past ten a nice little sailing breeze came along, and we ran ahead of the yacht *Merlin*, which was bound for Gravesend; but she, setting her topsail, ultimately passed us.

Our intention was to make for the Isle of Wight by easy week-end stages, and later to the westward, having a good look round the interesting ports on the way. No paid-hand or pilot was ever employed, except once when entering a strange harbour at midnight against a strong ebb and head-wind, where uncertain, baffling puffs and cross-currents usually necessitate employing either a pilot or tug: but this incident will be related in due course, and the employment of a pilot was less for navigational than for other reasons. But apart from this we went from Essex to Cornwall and back to the Solent always with a crew of two, and both amateurs. The charts and sailing directions in common use were sufficient aid, assisted by local information occasionally picked up at various places as we went along. One of the most helpful books carried was a book of tidal streams based on the time of high water, Dover. Consequently, wherever we were along the coast we knew exactly in what direction the tide was setting us. The value of this when doing a night passage across a wide, open bay, or in a fog, will be readily apparent. I know that there are some casual people who boast of sailing without such aids. But to neglect to avail oneself of such aids as exist is to display a conceit and foolishness which would be condemned by any true sailor. To hazard your own life and that of your ship unnecessarily is mere folly: it is neither smart nor good seamanship, and such a reputation may be remembered when the yacht's insurance is about to be renewed.

Having set a course from Holywell Point E. by N., we had passed the West Buxey Buoy by eleven, and were just able to close-haul to the Ridge Buoy. The sun burst out, *Vivette* gently heeled to the breeze that came forth from the cloudless sky, and already we were on our way to the coast where the waters are bluer, mud-banks fewer, and the atmosphere warmer. Half-an-hour later we had passed the Ridge Buoy, and overtook a hay-barge that had started ahead of us from the Crouch. By mid-day we had brought the South Buxey Buoy abeam, and presently, when the South Whitaker bore due S., went about on the other tack and cut across the Whitaker Spit. We had thus carried the last of the ebb out of

the Crouch into the broader Swin Channel, where the flood-tide, making to the southward, had barely begun. For a time a curious mirage hung over the water, but there was a change coming. The wind gradually freshened as we set a course SW.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W., and here we were in the great thoroughfare which leads to the London river. Yachts and barges, tramps, liners, full-rigged ships, and vessels of every kind were passing. We were the smallest of the fleet as we sped gaily on with a freshening breeze, and a nasty wash from a couple of steam fish-carriers racing abreast of each other for the Billingsgate market kept us busily on the *qui vive*.

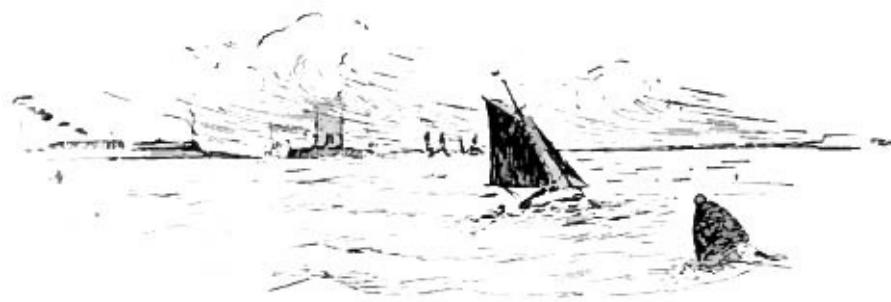


SWIN MIDDLE LIGHTSHIP

We passed the Swin Lightship as she was swinging to the tide. Just beyond here the channel gives a sudden turn in a more southerly direction, and the space between the NE. Maplin and the SW. Middle Buoys is something like going through a gateway none too wide for the amount of traffic which is always going up and down. By a quarter to two in the afternoon we were abreast of the Maplin Light — the "Sheers," as it is known among sailing men — and were making good time with the assistance of the strong tide now under us and a nice breeze above. After being some time at SE. the wind gradually veered to S. and presently to SW. Before we had reached the Mouse Lightship it had gone right ahead, had freshened considerably, and with wind against tide the nasty hollow sea which is so notorious at the mouth of the Thames got up. Three yachts astern of us which were apparently racing from Burnham to Southend lost no time in shortening canvas, taking in topsails and flying-jibs with some haste. The smallest of the three also stowed his staysail, and we, after carrying on for some time, had to do likewise when the spray began to come aboard in bucketfuls, to be followed by one or two "green uns." It was annoying to have the wind head us like this after wasting so much time earlier in the day through fog and calms, but we had started out for Port Victoria, and there we were going if we could get.

The landsman who looks at the map of England imagines that the Thames estuary is one vast sheet of water; so, indeed, it is, but in many places the water barely covers the treacherous, wreck-strewn banks, so that a great part of this space is unnavigable and separated into channels. In the olden days, before surveys were made and charts issued, the Thames entrance must have been a series of death-traps to the unwary, but from the very earliest times sailors relied on their lead and line more extensively than we are accustomed nowadays, knowing at a glance with the chart in front of one exactly the amount of water below one's keel.

But in spite of the considerable width of the Swin in the vicinity of the Mouse Lightvessel it was remarkable how all the traffic within sight somehow converged to one point. The full-rigged ship that we had first seen as we came across the Whitaker, and, as long as the breeze was moderate, we had out-sailed, now came upon us: the three racing yachts and ourselves were tacking all of a bunch, while into the midst of us all came a big black steam yacht flying the white ensign. The weather looked like being a repetition of yesterday as the sky began to seem highly ominous and to take on a depressing curtain of black. Giving my mate the helm I went below and looked at the glass, finding to my discomfort that it had dropped three-tenths, so the sooner we got to our destination the better. The day was getting on, the tide would soon be done, and the wind and sea were increasing. To be boxing about here among banks and buoys and all manner of night traffic would not be pleasant, and my friend had an important engagement in town in the morning. We ought to have reefed, but under mainsail and jib we sloshed along, and this being the first time since I bought *Vivette* that I had seen her in anything "popply," gave me the greatest confidence in her. We were doing a long leg and a short, making good tacks between the Maplins and the Kentish shores, but the sun was getting lower and lower ahead of us, and the sky was taking on a depressing look.



ENTRANCE TO THE MEDWAY

At last we sighted the Nore Lightship, the farthest outpost of our port. The wind coming more westerly, I thought that by standing in nearer to the Isle of

Sheppey we might find easier water, but there was no appreciable difference. The *Walton Belle*, full of trippers bound for London, passed us as we were over this side, and at length with an ever-slackening tide we came abreast of the Nore and entered the beautifully buoyed channel leading into the Medway. Past the fort we went about as we got alongside H.M.S. *Dreadnought*, looking a most formidable and interesting mass of complications with her triple masts and wireless telegraph gear aloft. Sheerness, with her warships and mammoth mooring buoys scattered all over the water, is, from a shipping point of view, scarcely less fascinating than Portsmouth; but it is no place for a small yacht with its exposed anchorage, so we were bound a little farther up the river to a little bight called somewhat magnificently Port Victoria. We saw a small forest of masts in the direction where our resting place should be, and finding a vacant mooring went about in mid-stream, lowered main and ran down comfortably under jib, picking up the buoy just as the ebb was making and the ships were swinging, eleven hours out from Burnham. We could not boast of having had the conditions favourable for a quick passage, but we had got in and saved our tide literally with a margin of a few seconds. Had we been a little later and encountered both adverse tide and contrary wind outside we should at least have spent a most uncomfortable night. But as it was, exhilarated with the punch to windward, and our faces encrusted white with sea-salt, we "made good," as the Americans say, by cooking ourselves a mess of meat, and then unable to keep awake any longer hung out the riding-light, let down the cots, and tumbled into our blankets.

*Vivette* rolled gently as the ebb sluiced by and cradled us to sleep.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM THE MEDWAY TO RAMSGATE

I HEARD a story once of an owner who, having left his yacht all the week at Port Victoria, came down one summer night not a little pleased to find that life afloat was free from the annoyance of insects which on land had been making themselves heard as well as felt. Coming out on deck in the cool of the evening, he turned to his man who was sitting forward smoking discontentedly.

“There don’t seem to be any wasps down here, John,” he remarked; “we’ve had a plague of them in town.”

“No, sir,” answered the man quietly, removing his pipe, and shifting his position, “I don’t wonder at that; there ain’t nothing down ‘ere for the poor things to eat.”

It is not unfair, in fact, to describe Port Victoria as one of the dreariest and most melancholy habitations in our country. If you sum it up by saying that it consists of a striking yacht club, a mean-looking building called an hotel, and a railway station pier, you have said everything that could be pleaded on its behalf. From the land side all around is unending and monotonous marshland, variegated here and there by a chimney or two from some brickworks or chemical factory. As the last expression of the abomination of desolation other places must be given only a second place. But with your back to the shore the picture is different: it is one continually moving panorama of shipping, both naval and mercantile. Battleships and cruisers, destroyers and torpedo-craft, fussy little pinnaces, tugs, colliers, Medway barges with their Dutch-like hulls and sprits, come past your cabin-door in a long pageant of interest. It is one of the finest free-shows in the world, and gains rather than loses by contrast with the dull shores through which it passes. Wyllie and others have depicted this so well, that to emphasise it the more is unnecessary.

I had left *Vivette* in charge of the waterman of the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, and coming down a few days later, since the tides were not favourable for continuing our voyage, it was decided to explore the Medway, which for years I had longed to do. There was a little black yacht astern of us slightly bigger than ourselves, and the owner hearing we had good charts for the river came aboard in the evening. This was Mr. Percy Unna, who had recently bought *Lona II.*, one

of the finest little six-tonners ever seen on the east coast. We found that he was bound south also, and single-handed, so we decided to cruise in company. But there had been a possibility of *Lona* not performing the voyage with her present owner, for a few weeks earlier, while lying at her moorings in the Orwell, she had been stolen by a bargee and a navvy, and with this quaint crew was bound away: unfortunately for the culprits, however, she stuck on the mud up the Stour, where she was subsequently found, and the men arrested. Mr. Unna told us he was about to attend the police-court on the following Monday, and the magistrate's sentence materially delayed the voyage which had been contemplated by these two rascals to Cardiff. Fortunately, though a certain amount of damage was done to the yacht, it was not considerable.

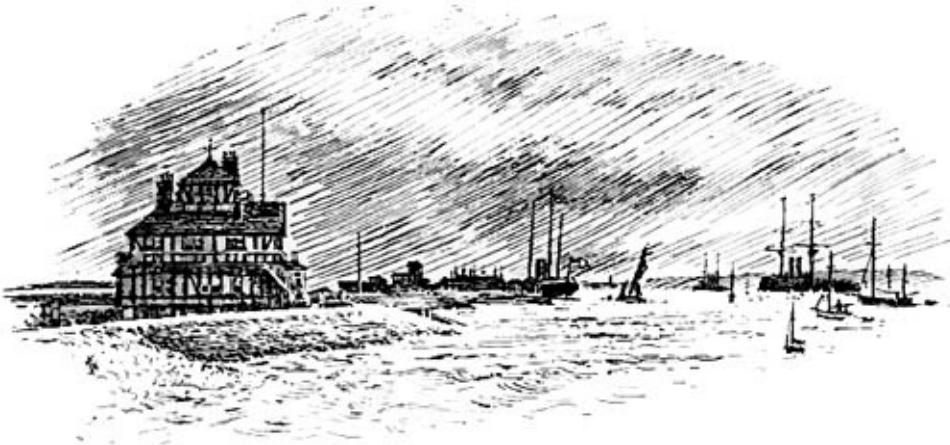
It was while our visitor was aboard in the evening, and the three of us were chatting in the cabin, that I thought I heard shouts outside. On rushing out I found that a thick, heavy fog had dropped down over everything, and one could see but a very few yards ahead. Right alongside *Vivette* was a torpedo-boat. Her redport light glaring into my face, and the sound of the ticking of her engines below, gave me quite a shock. It was her skipper who was hailing us.

"That white light ahead, sir — is that Port Victoria Pier."

"Good heavens, no. That's a yacht's riding-light. Better leave that well to port, or you'll be on top of the pier."

And so expressing his thanks he started his engines and disappeared again into the fog, as I heard one of his men suggesting it would be advisable to go well to starboard in order to avoid a wreck that lay just past the pier. Scarcely had we recovered from this surprise when a deep-voiced siren rose sounding up from the sea, and presently what must have been a big cruiser or battleship grunted her way slowly up with the tide. Instantly all the shipping in the Medway began to ring their fog-bells like timid creatures alarmed by the approach of a voracious monster. There were several big coal-hulks and an immense repair-ship as big as a liner out in the fairway, and there were some obsoletes lying farther up the river. The nerve of the man who dared to navigate such a ship up the Medway, with its twists and turns, on such a night, with a spring flood-tide, was admirable. Though we could see nothing, we could almost feel her going by in the blackness. We were thankful that we were snugly riding in the little bay which Port Victoria makes; but since one torpedo-boat had lost her way, we began to wonder whether we should be roused by a sudden, sickening crash against our sides, the splintering, snapping of wood, followed by the gurgling inrush of the water. With these pleasant thoughts we went to sleep, but not before several times we had paid a visit to the bows to make quite sure the riding-light was burning brightly.

By the morning all trace of fog had disappeared, and in its stead came a delightful sailing breeze, with glorious, hot sunshine. *Lona* suggested our sailing with him, so, leaving the *Vivette* at her moorings, we took advantage of the flood, set spinnaker when we were in the fairway, and had a delightful trip up to Chatham as far as Upnor Castle, admiring alike the natural beauty of the river here and the business-like activities of the naval dockyards. Catching the ebb back we tacked down Gillingham Reach, where, in Elizabethan times and later, our men-of-war used to lie moored after being built at the Deptford Royal Dockyard. Nice and quiet they would have lain here while the sixteenth-century barges that had loaded up with guns and war stores from the Tower of London, having dropped down with the tide to the entrance of the Medway, came up the river alongside the big ships and discharged their cargo.



PORt VICTORIA

H.M. Yacht *Victoria and Albert* alongside the Pier

It was a week later when I rejoined *Vivette* to take her on a stage farther. During the week the craft off Port Victoria had been joined by the arrival of His Majesty's yacht *Victoria and Albert*, which was moored just above us alongside the pier, and at ten that night the train, bringing the King and Queen, drew up alongside the yacht. High water next morning was at 5.15, and we wanted to make an early start, so as to carry the ebb down to the North Foreland. I looked out at four o'clock, when the weather seemed anything but tempting. The royal yacht had just hoisted her white ensign at the stern and the royal standard at the main, and was getting under way for Reval. She would get a bit of a dusting when she got outside, and this we learned from the papers afterwards was the case.

It was not a tempting morning to go outside, but after waiting some time *Lona* put to sea, and at 9.15 we followed also. The glass was not optimistic, and there would be plenty of wind about during the day. However, as we were anxious to

get on, and the wind was NW., we set forth, although we should have only two and a quarter hours of ebb-tide with us. We carefully inspected the reefing gear to see that it was working satisfactorily, for we should have to rely on it before we got into port again; and rolling in the equivalent of one reef in the main, we hoisted No. 2 jib, slipped our moorings, tore down the Medway past Sheerness Fort, and out into the Nore. There was a goodly lop on again. The wind came down in squalls, and although the sea was in the same direction, everywhere around were white horses and nasty steep seas. Just as we had entered Sheerness, so as we left, the sky was lurid and threatening, with anything likely to happen. But we were tearing along now, and there was to be no going back. It was a picture reminiscent of some of Turner's earlier works, with the shipping and craft, the sea pea-green where it was deeper, and the whitened crests where it ran shallow, but there was little opportunity now for such thoughts as these. We were bound down through the four-fathom channel. *Lona* had decided to go by a slightly longer route, the Prince's Channel, but he got deeper water and better seas, and though my way was the shorter, I regretted before long to have chosen this.

The Four-Fathoms Channel is rather a misnomer: it does not contain such a depth except at high water. Consequently, with most of the ebb run out, there was far less water when we began to negotiate it. At dead low water there is an average depth of about twelve feet only. This way down to the Foreland might be likened to the narrow path which leads up to a house through a back garden. It is used by trading barges, as its counterpart on land would be used by tradesmen's boys. Its boundaries are indicated by buoys of different shapes and patterns, not always easy to see, and sometimes confusing when discovered bobbing up and down among the waves.

Leaving the main channel at the Cant Buoy, we cut across the back garden, so to speak, and laying a course SE.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. for the Spile Buoy, which guards the entrance to the four-fathom way, duly allowed for the direction of the tide setting us to the eastward. With the wind NW. we were now practically running free, and as soon as we got into the shallow water we began to realise pretty fully what was in store for us. The sea rolled up astern, threatening to come aboard every minute, but nothing except a little spray reached us. With the wind right aft and the tiresome little seas it was only with some difficulty that I could keep the yacht on her course, whilst it was very necessary that we should not fail to pick up the Spile Buoy. However, we found it all right, and laying a course E. by S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. with the tide in the same direction, and therefore nothing to allow for it, we were heading for the West Middle Buoy. It was when we were distant about three-quarters of a mile that we suddenly bumped heavily, to our dismay. I

looked at the chart again, and saw that we ought to be in ten feet of water at low water springs. Now as this was neaps, and there were still an hour and a half before low water, it seemed inexplicable. We wondered if the incident were going to be repeated, but happily the suspense was not long, for we never touched again. The chart gave the bottom as mud, and the nature of the bump seemed to indicate this. Had it been of harder substance — some of the cement boulders, for instance, which a little farther on are scattered about — and had the depth shallowed just a little bit more, we should certainly have been in a serious condition, going at the pace we were. To find a reason for having touched at all, some allowance must be made of course for the scend of the sea; but, as stated already, *Vivette* draws only four and a quarter feet, and with the condition of the tide there must have been a good thirteen feet depth, or at least eight feet of water under our keel. How was it, then, that we touched? I think it was partly owing to the scend of the sea and partly to the fact that the Spile Bank, which the Admiralty chart states to be extending eastward, must also have extended slightly to the southward.

To clear the East Spaniard Shoals we had to close-haul, and so bad was the sea that I hesitated for a while whether to stand farther out and join the Prince's; but as we could sail her presently with a freer wind again I kept to the original plan, and steered SE. to allow for the tide which was now flooding. The West Last Buoy for which we were now making was about four and a half miles distant, bearing SE. by S. I had thus allowed the extra point to counteract the flood, and this course eventually brought us within about a mile of the West Pan Sand Buoy, which resembles the West Last so closely that it is unfortunate the Admiralty do not put a St. Andrew's Cross on the top instead of merely changing the colour, for with the spray dashing over it, and the variations of the atmosphere, it is not easy to discriminate.

It was from about this point that the wind and sea conspired to joke with us right heartily. We rolled in as much as three reefs, and away we rushed with the sea swishing over us. It was in one of these moments that the glasses which I was wearing disappeared, and this happening to be the only occasion when I had omitted to bring a spare pair on board, the rest of the day's sail was one of considerable discomfort. For instance, such prominent landmarks as Reculvers Towers, which are invaluable for leading down to the buoy we were making for, were not visible to me, so I relied on the new mate who had joined me at Port Victoria to keep a smart look-out. But he, partly owing to the fact that we had not broken our fast for about six hours or more, and partly because of the tossing about of the ship, began to show signs indicative of *mal de mer*. So I gave him the tiller, shot into the cabin for some preventative which I always carry, and

dosed him, much against his will. It was effectual, however, in doing of what it ought, and prevented me from being absolutely single-handed without a pair of eyes to keep the look-out. In a few minutes he was asking for food, and so from the chaos of cushions, and books, and all sorts of ropes and gear which had joined the general confusion reigning below, some damp ship's biscuits and some very salt bloater-paste were extracted and handed out into the dripping well.

By now we had entered the narrow Horse Channel leading into the Gore Passage between the mainland and the treacherous Margate Hook sands, on which many a vessel has come to grief. This sand dries to the extent of three and five feet at the lowest tides, and has been the scene of many a rescue from shipwreck, sad and terrible, in the winter gales. But there is on record the story of the young guardsman (which is doubtless entirely untrue), who with greater daring than knowledge had chartered a yacht and unhappily got stuck on the Margate Hook. This was espied by the Margate men as a sure and certain chance of earning salvage money, so the *Friend to All Nations* put out from the shore and was soon alongside the gallant young officer.

“What the blazes do you want?” he shouted angrily as they came on with the confidence of a pack of wolves sure of their prey.

“You’re ashore where you are,” they shouted back, “an’ we’ve come to get you off. But you don’t need to worry, sir,” solaced the sharks; “we knows this bit of sand all right, don’t we, Bill? We’ll come aboard to get you off when the tide rises.”

The offer, however, was not received in quite the same tone with which it was made.

“I’m not ashore, you something idiots — I’ve come here to play go’f. Can’t I go where I like without your confounded interference? Come aboard at your peril, but . . .”

And with that the salvage job that might have been was not, while the *Friend to All Nations*, full of all uncharitableness, went back against wind and tide to Margate.

I had hoped that the wind being still NW. we might find the sea a little less turbulent under the lee of the Margate Hook, but the reverse was rather the case, for the flood was coming up against the wind. Getting an impetus through sliding over the watershed, and impelled by the wind, the seas came rolling on to our quarter in a manner quite unpleasant enough. Just astern of us came the s.s. *Koh-i-noor* and another passenger boat, rolling about quite a little bit. As we gradually drew out of the Gore the waves became longer but the hollows deeper, and as we passed Margate and began to approach the North Foreland we had a

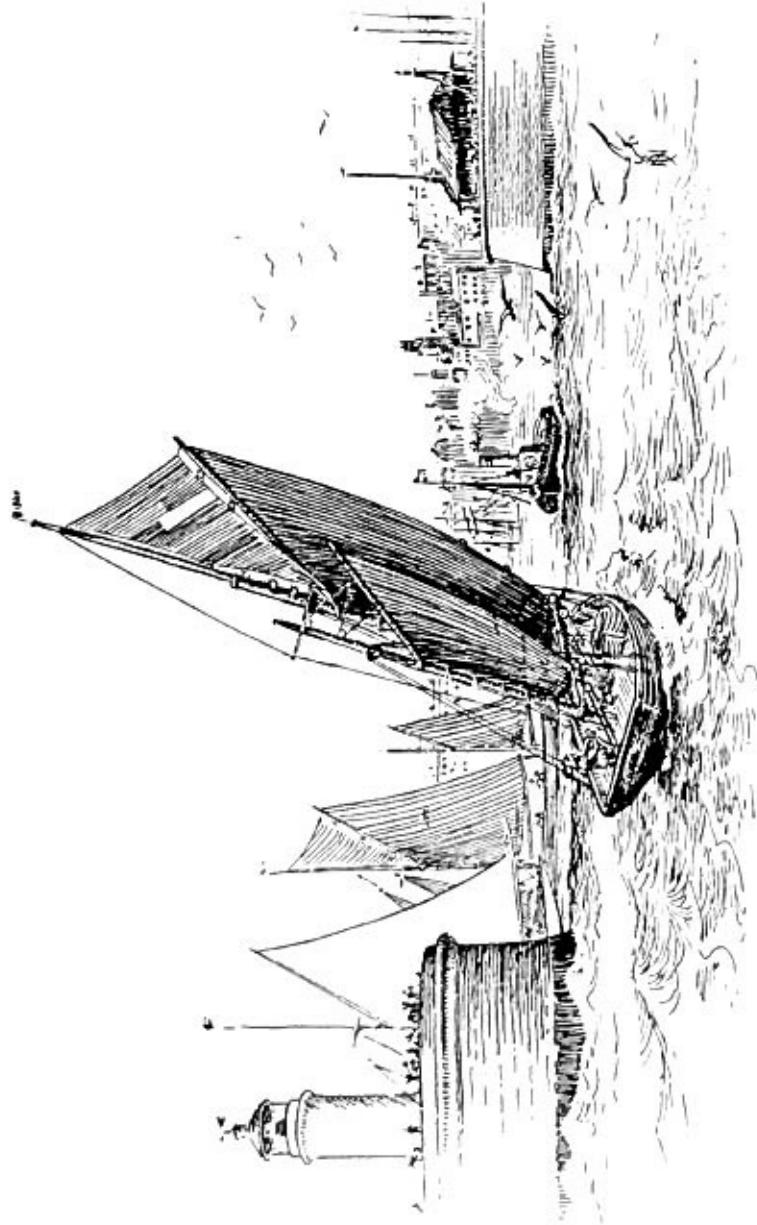
fairly exciting time. First of all the fore-hatch, which had been carelessly left without its iron bar over it, got adrift, but we soon secured that. Then the little eight-foot pram dinghy towing astern, which had rushed up hills and down valleys for some time, now suddenly broke adrift, but there was far too much popple to turn back and endeavour to rescue her, and she only just cleared the star-board paddle of one of the oncoming passenger steamers that had put in to Margate and was proceeding to Ramsgate. It was a pity to have lost the boat when so near to our destination, but the wind and tide were setting in the direction of the shore, so I hoped that she would find her way to the beach, but there, perhaps, to be pounded quickly to pieces.

In order to give the shore a fairly wide berth, and get perhaps smoother water, we went nearly out to the Long Nose Buoy, and at last, with the Foreland opening out sufficiently to bear away, gibed her in a smooth, having previously rolled in the last reef, rushing on at a good pace past Broadstairs, where a couple of ketches brought-up were rolling wildly. As we approached Ramsgate we saw one of the big smack-like pleasure yachts, which had just come out of harbour, immediately run back to the shelter she had left. In order to cheat the tide we ran on past the entrance to the harbour, and then quietly tacked in, the mate, who was now recovered from his previous indisposition, being of great assistance with his local knowledge. The usual pilots rowed out to meet us, but declining their services, we ran up the West Gully, mooring alongside *Lona*, seven hours out from Port Victoria, making an average of over five knots an hour, which, considering that we had the tide against us for most of the way, was not slow. The assistant harbourmaster told us that we must have "got it a bit bad" round the Foreland, as he said the *Koh-i-noor* had arrived with her decks wet all over. This was the day when, during the race from Harwich to Burnham of the 15-metres and 52-footers, a heavy squall struck *Ma'oona* off the Gunfleet, and her mast went by the board, and she was taken in tow by the *Lucida* and *Mariska* to Port Victoria. During the same afternoon the *Norge* had capsized near the Chapman Light, and her crew were rescued with great difficulty. The next issue of *The Daily Graphic* contained along account of this, the first trip of the season of the *Koh-i-noor*, almost all of her passengers having been seasick and bitterly cold during the journey. We ourselves, wet through to the skin and our teeth chattering, were not sorry to have a good hot meal and our clothes dried ashore.

*Lona* also, we learned, had had plenty of fun. Arriving off Ramsgate ahead of his tide, he had dropped anchor outside, where the jib had thrashed itself into such damage before it could be taken in that it had to be replaced with a new one. But his voyage had been done single-handed, and was a thing to be proud of. I reported the loss of my dinghy to the coastguard, and indicated as nearly as

possible where this had taken place, asking that the Margate coastguards might be informed. The next morning at six the same red-faced official woke me up from my peaceful slumbers to say that we could not have lost her off a better place. She had been seen by the Foreness coastguards, and picked up two hours after the incident, and was now in their keeping. Later in the day I called on Captain Nicholson, R.N., in command of the Coastguard District, who very kindly put every facility in my way for regaining the truant.

The Foreness coastguards were rung up on the telephone, and the same afternoon I walked over and found her not only undamaged in the slightest, but without even her bailer missing. After arranging for her to be delivered by cart next day in Ramsgate Harbour, I settled the whole matter for the sum of fifteen shillings. The coastguards informed me that when they saw the dinghy separate, they thought we had purposely cut her adrift owing to the sea running. Next morning the dinghy duly arrived on the top of a cart, and I amused myself sailing her up and down the harbour for the rest of the day. It was with no little gratification that both yacht and her satellite had come round so well, and that *Vivette* had for the second time shown herself to be so efficient in sea-going qualities, and so easy to handle in a sea-way.



ENTRANCE TO RAMSGATE HARBOUR

## CHAPTER III

### FROM RAMSGATE TO NEWHAVEN

THE first attempt to set forth from Ramsgate was unsuccessful. Having left the yacht in the inner harbour during my absence, in company with some half-dozen others of all sizes, a few days later we solemnly processed out of the lock gates, and at the conclusion of the week-end recessed back. Only one yacht dared to venture outside, and she just escaped being smashed to pieces on the north pier by a matter of inches, with the sheet of her jib carried away and the sail flapping madly in the south-west wind, which blew hard. However, we were very snug inside, and the tedium of waiting was dispelled by the kind hospitality of the owner of the *Moretta* (18 tons cutter, R.T.Y.C.). During the afternoon we watched the race of the 23-metre yachts, the schoonerclass, the 15-metre, and the old "fifty-twos" as they came past Ramsgate to Deal. Outside the Goodwins they had all the sea they cared about. It was a fine sight to see the finest of our fleet punching against wind and sea, and in the evening I counted seventeen yachts and traders brought up in the Downs, where bad weather was brewing. Two or three, including *Lucida* and *Shimna*, ran into the East Gully. The former had evidently strained herself in the tumble off the sands, judging by the appearance of her seams; but no one who saw her looking so trim and otherwise smart suspected that a few weeks later she would be lying in Ostend, damaged beyond repair and abandoned to the underwriters.

June 20 saw us up betimes and cleared out of the harbour by 8.30, four hours after high water, Dover, so as to catch the first of the westgoing tide. The wind was in the very quarter we had been hoping for — north-east. With a rising glass and a nice smart breeze, under whole main, foresail, and No. 2 jib, we set a course due south to the Deal Bank Buoy, followed half-an-hour later by *Lona*. It was grand to feel one's freedom again and to be clear of Ramsgate Harbour. The sun came out and brightened the chalk cliffs and speckled the sea. Now and again a wave of a cross sea came dancing over *Vivette*'s quarter, though nothing to hurt, but a gradual sense of disinterestedness in the scenery showing itself on the part of the mate, the useful remedy was brought out, with the same wholesome effect as before.

Knowing that the tide was setting me down on to the South Foreland, where a

green lightship was standing sentinel over a wreck, I stood out from the shore, half to a whole point; then I laid a course SW. by W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. to fetch Dungeness, presently altering this to a half-point farther south in order to allow for the tide setting me into Dungeness Bay. Dover was passed at 10.45, so we knew we were wasting no time. Astern of us came *Lona*, like ourselves, rolling a bit, but just before Dungeness, which we reached at 1.45, she came abreast and passed us. It was about this time that a fleet of Rye fishing-luggers came tacking out from Dungeness Roads, the foremost boat heading on a course that I could see would bring him right across our bows. Running free, it would, of course, have been my duty to give way to him. I had calculated the gap between, so that, holding on my present course, I should clear him by several lengths, which I eventually did. Had I altered my helm, I should have had to gybe, a proceeding that I did not care about till absolutely necessary, as the ship was rolling a good deal. However, the lugger did not seem over pleased, and kindly favoured us with his opinion that "we ought to have known better."

The weather seemed to have made up its mind to be fine, but from the sky I thought we should have more wind. This came in a sudden squall in Rye Bay, in which we had to luff up speedily, but we soon got the foresail off her and reefed the main. For a few moments it was exciting, and we saw *Lona*, who had been ahead some distance to leeward, run right up on our weather and reef. But it was glorious going, with the *Vivette* riding the seas now like a duck and as comfortable under snug canvas as ever man could wish. We tore past Hastings and Bexhill at a good eight knots. Below the mate was sleeping, ahead the brown sails of *Lona* were bobbing up and down on the endless green sea, while a couple of fishing-boats at anchor, with the mizen set, were tumbling about to leeward. I sat on the weather deck, my back against the wire lifelines that run round the *Vivette*, and wondered why, when Nature's pleasures were so inexpensive, we were the only two little craft running down Channel under such ideal conditions. It was a day that will live in my memory as long as ever I shall remember anything at all.

But, as if this enjoyment was likely to become monotonous, when we had cleared the Royal Sovereign Lightship, so that it was just past our beam, and with Beachy Head bearing W. by S., the waves at last became too much for the dinghy's painter, and for a second time she broke adrift. It was very annoying, as we were making an excellent passage and shortly should pick up our tide again to get us past Beachy Head; but though it hurt my feelings terribly to leave her alone, to be blown perhaps across to France, or perhaps to be stove in during the night by another vessel, yet I felt that it would be better to lose her than try to rescue her under those conditions. So, after having carefully taken a bearing and

noted the exact conditions of wind and tide, I looked round the sea astern for a sign of any other craft, and hoped that one of the fishing-boats might perhaps pick her up. But for that incident the voyage so far had been perfect. I had taken the precaution before setting out from Ramsgate to give her a strong rope and not too short, but there had been such a continuous series of jerks on the tow-rope all day, that at last it had to give somewhere near the overfalls at that spot marked on the chart as the Horse of Willingdon.

By 6.30 P.M. we had Beachy Head astern of us, and, setting the yacht on a course NW. by W., made for Newhaven, accomplishing the last eight miles within the hour. Off Hope Point, the wind falling lighter, we shook out all our reefs and set foresail, passing inside Newhaven piers a few minutes after *Lona*, having accomplished the seventy-three miles from Ramsgate in eleven hours, making an average of over six and a half miles an hour. Finally, in a light air, we tacked up the harbour and berthed at No. 9 stage alongside *Lona*.



BEACHY HEAD AND LIGHTHOUSE

Again I sought out the coastguard, who promised to telephone to Beachy Head, who in turn telephoned along the coast eastward. We spent the day following our arrival on the magnificent downs overlooking the sea. A perfect day, with hardly a ripple on the sea, we lay basking in the sun watching a big, white, full-rigged ship approach the land flying her national ensign, having come "from foreign." Presently a tug came snorting out and, after the usual haggling as to price, took her in tow. A little breeze came up to help the trawlers on the horizon, a few open boats in the foreground of the picture moved to the gentle swell of the emerald-blue sea, while in the middle distance a white steam yacht, a red-sail yawl, and a tubby old tramp added new colour to the picture. Summer was here with all its glory on sea; ashore it had covered the never-ending downs

with a soft carpet of purple and green. We came down from the cliffs to a little white speck below that had carried us to this fair spot, and went on board to lunch.

Presently the coastguard, smart and spruce in white-topped cap and gold braid, came aboard, too, to say that Bexhill had that morning reported a fishing-smack R 77 at daybreak going east, towing a white dinghy astern answering to our description.

I suggested that the trawler, wishing to land his fish as early as possible, would not care to plug against a north-easter too long. Although a Ramsgate boat, she might put in either to Hastings or Folkestone, or even Dover, to which the coastguard agreed. Accordingly I wired to the Receiver of Wrecks for that district asking him to let me know details of the trawler; for it was significant that trawlers' dinghies are not as a rule painted white, nor do they tow them at sea, but carry them on deck. Therefore my hopes rose high until the reply came back from the Receiver of Wrecks (to whom, of course, she would have been handed over), "Know nothing of R 77 or dinghy." Leaving the mate in charge of the yacht till I should return at the end of the week, I went up to town and informed the Insurance Company of my loss. A few days later the mate sent me the welcome information that the dinghy had been found, and was now lying at the Customs House, Shoreham. Thither I journeyed the following day, only to find that, it being the King's birthday, the building was closed; and, though I searched all Shoreham and the neighbourhood for any of the officials, the only news I could get was from a kindly old sail-maker who was stitching away close by the harbour, whose evidence gave me absolute assurance that the dinghy locked up in the Government's shed was mine. Presently we were joined by three pilots, with whom I whiled away the time discussing three-point bearing and other interesting branches of navigation. They had taken more than ordinary interest in the wayward 8-footer.

Outside in the offing lay a steamer of about 500 tons that was waiting for tide. In a few moments the pilots were putting out to her to bring her in. It was that ship, in fact, that had rescued our lost appendage, and they very kindly offered to convey a message to the skipper asking him to meet me the next morning at the Custom House.

In the twilight the s.s. *Webb* came slowly up the harbour.

"Skipper says he'll be there at eleven," came a shout from the bridge as the ship just squeezed through the lock.

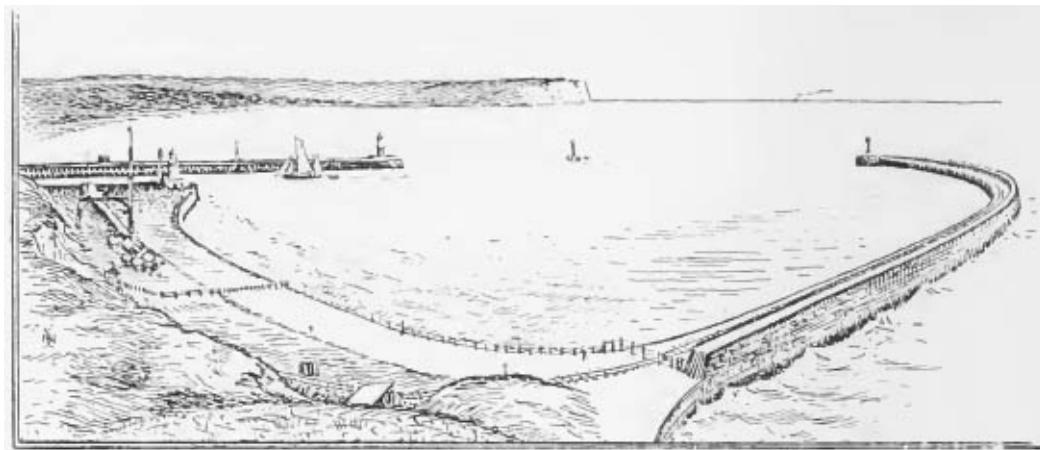
"All right! I'll be there."

I stayed the night at a delightful little inn, kept by a retired shipbuilder, overlooking the water, with a nice old bay-window that opened out on to a dozen

yachts fitting out for the summer. It was just such a snug little haven as would have delighted the heart of W. W. Jacobs. While we talked in the evening I found that that terrible dinghy was one of the topics of the town. The subject was in every man and boy's mouth. How did I come to lose her? Where was I bound from? And then it all had to be told again over our whisky to those who had missed the beginning of the story. It is wonderful what possibilities lie in 8 feet of pinewood. Outside the Custom House was the usual notice announcing the finding of the derelict dinghy. It all seemed far too serious for so small a matter.

The captain of the *Webb* arrived at the appointed time. He had apparently picked the boat up within an hour of our losing her. So, after agreeing to pay a sovereign claimed as salvage and a fee of two shillings to the Board of Trade, and having signed no end of official matter, we shook hands and parted. The dinghy was forthwith carried down to the water, and, having rowed up the harbour, I secured the services of two men and a boy to carry her to the railway station.

Putting her in the guard's van, we got to Newhaven at last, where I launched her into the water just astern of one of the Dieppe steampackets, and surprised the mate by rowing up alongside with the dinghy's thwarts disfigured by luggage-labels.



ENTRANCE TO NEWHAVEN HARBOUR

## CHAPTER IV

### FROM NEWHAVEN TO HAMBLE

THE weather on the following morning looked anything but promising, and the local seafarers shook their heads ominously. The skipper of a big sailing ship reported that they had had a dirty night in the Channel. However, about eleven o'clock the sky took on a sudden change for the better, and the glass began to go up. So, since the wind was as fair as we could wish, I decided to make a start, and, setting whole main, foresail, and No. 2 jib, we had cleared the Newhaven piers by 11.25 A.M., just ahead of the Dieppe boat. With a delightful wind from the north-east we laid a course W. by S. across a sea resplendent with sparkling sunshine. The Owers Lightship is about thirty miles from Newhaven W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S., but I had conceded the extra half-point to allow for indraught into the bay that extends between Selsey Bill and Beachy Head, and also in order that when I picked up the Owers I might be well to the southward of it. I could not hope to carry a favourable tide any longer than about the time I should reach this point; and, knowing that the direction of the stream would besetting me then on towards the nasty shoals between the lightship and Selsey, I felt justified in keeping thus far away from the land. There was, too, the possibility that the wind might veer round to the south or south-west, for in the direction of the latter there was that curious light on the horizon that usually foretells such a change.

It was to be a delightfully comfortable sail, with a steady though light wind, and overhead a hot, scorching sun. A haze hung over the land, and eventually blotted it out. *Lona* had set out for Bembridge the previous day, so that we were alone again. We steered a steady course, and crossed a little to the south of the track of shipping between Beachy Head and the Owers. German liners, a British gunboat, colliers, tramps, and excursion steamers kept us interested all the time. Far away ahead, hull down on the horizon, I could see a topsail schooner. We found she kept steadily to our course — W. by S. — and mile by mile we got nearer and nearer until we were abreast, when she altered her course to make for the south of the Wight.

At about five o'clock we sighted the Owers on the starboard bow, bearing about NW. by W., distant five to six miles. This was just about where I had

calculated to be, so we had made a good landfall. But now the wind dropped, and, with a strong spring tide against us, we only got abreast of the Owers at seven. There we remained almost stationary till nine, the wind coming and going in little puffs that barely enabled us to stem the 2½-knot tide. We rolled uncomfortably, and all the time the tide was setting us on to the lightship, so I was glad we had kept well to the south. An Antwerp pilot schooner regarded us with extreme curiosity as he cruised about in wait for a liner. Whether we looked too small or too helpless rolling unceasingly in the swell I know not, but all the crew lined up on their weather-deck and did not take their eyes off us until we had got too far away from them.

At sunset I gave the mate the tiller and went below to fetch out the side-lights; then, having fixed them and seen they were burning all right, I kept the riding-light hung up just inside the cabin in case of an overtaking boat coming down on the top of us. Covering it over to hide the glare from the steersman's eyes, I lighted the cabin lamp and spread the Admiralty Chart on the table, as we should need to avoid any mistake going up Spithead, which I had never navigated before. The lightship with its red and white flashes seemed to get no farther away, but with the turn of the tide came a smart little breeze and away we went, steering NW. ½ W. to pick up the Nab. "Two quick flashes every 45 sec," said the chart, and at the rate we were going we ought soon to see it, for it is visible for eleven miles. The wind freshened a good deal and became at times squally. The glass had fallen two-tenths and the sunset had been yellow, so, not knowing what the night had to bring forth, we handed foresail and rolled in a bit of the main as we rushed through the darkness like a mad motor, with the powerful electric light of St. Catherine's flashing to leeward. Away to the south-west we could see the long rows of a liner's lights. Then flash, flash! I looked at my compass; *Vivette* was dead on her course.

"Two flashes every 45 sec." Yes, that was the Nab. Nearer and more powerful became the lights, so I left the tiller again and went below to work out a course for Bembridge Harbour, or at least to bring us just south-east of St. Helen's Fort, where we might anchor till daylight. The tide would be ebbing out of Bembridge, which I had never seen and was indifferently charted. But the wind was blowing right into the harbour, and if the lights were showing I thought of having a shot for it. However, in the midst of these reckonings the mate sung out from the cockpit —

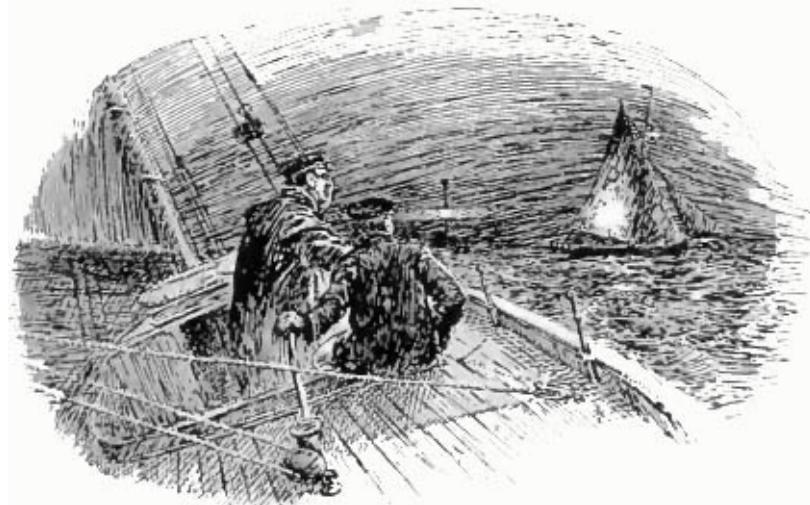
"White light ahead!"

I came out of the cabin and, seeing she was a pilot boat, showed the riding-light, which I kept holding up in the air and then concealing. The pilot boat saw it and burnt his flare in response.

"Pilot, ahoy-y-y!" I shouted, and we manoeuvred to get near each other. "Will you take me into Bembridge?"

"Yer can't get in just yet; tide's ebbin'!" came the reply across the waves.

So we decided to push on to Hamble, as we had originally intended. The strong tide was carrying us every moment nearer the Nab Lightship, so, putting her on the same course as before, we soon passed the Warner and Noman's Fort.



THE PILOT OFF THE NAB

Then, steering exactly NW., we passed to leeward of a number of battleships brought up off Spithead, and about to depart for the Naval Manoeuvres. The breeze was moderate, and we should just about save our tide. Going below, I got the Primus to work and brewed ourselves some hot cocoa, which was like meat and wine to our tired bodies. Then the dawn gradually came, gentle and beautiful, over the Hampshire shore. A sweet smell of hay came floating to our nostrils with the returning light, and in the far distance right ahead gleamed the East Bramble and Calshot lights. We took in the side-lights, shook out the reef, set foresail, and overhauled a ketch. Then just as we reached the mouth of the Hamble the wind died utterly away, till at length with the first of the Hood came a gentle zephyr; so we tacked up to Hamble village, lowered main, and ran down to a mooring which we picked up at six o'clock, nineteen hours out from Newhaven. We cooked breakfast, and then tumbled asleep till after mid-day.

The next few weeks I made Hamble my head-quarters, cruising up and down the Solent, visiting Bembridge and Cowes, seeing any amount of racing, the *Indomitable*, fresh from her trip across the Atlantic, and many other fascinating sights. There is nothing like this part of the world for its interesting shipping — yachts, traders, and naval vessels of all kinds. The scenery inland is beautiful, and I had no end of fun sailing up to Botley and back in my dinghy, or taking her

out to Southampton Water to see how much she could stand with wind and tide kicking up a bit of a fuss. But she flop-flopped through it all beautifully after the manner of her class. Then through the kindness of a friend I was enabled to experience a new sport of motor-boating. I hope and believe that nothing will ever tempt me from sailing to motoring, but I can see now what a fascinating thing it is to steer a motor-craft flying along at delightful speeds; and one day, too, we saw the famous hydroplane Ricochette skimming over the top of the water like a wild duck.

But at last, about the middle of August, having shipped a new mate, we turned our faces regretfully from Hamble.

## CHAPTER V

### FROM HAMBLE TO POOLE

THE Isle of Wight tides take a little understanding, but, after making a careful study of them and deducing a formula therefrom, they were soon quite rational. Taking advantage of a slack in the tide, we started out from Hamble at 10.30 A.M. with a south-east wind, light, under main, No. 1 jib, and foresail. As we cleared the Hamble Spit a big black schooner-yacht got under way, but try all we could, with a strong spring flood-tide against us and a light wind, it was not till 1.30 that we had Calshot Castle astern. The schooner did but little better; the modern flyers gradually forged ahead, but some others, seeing they were making but little headway, ran back to Southampton Water.

After passing Calshot Lightship we had a fair wind for the rest of our journey. A big German-American liner crowded with passengers and emigrants came by, making a picture of dignified beauty with her enormous freeboard and top-hamper. With a 3½-knot tide under us we soon got along down the Solent, than on either side of which surely no scenery could be fairer, with a wealth of hills, valleys, and rich woods. Setting a course W. by S. we flew past Yarmouth, looking very snug in its bay, and had a good look at the unfortunate *Gladiator* lying on her side — a sad, miserable object, like an enormous dead whale. In order to avoid being carried down to the Needles by the 5-knot tide, I edged over to the Hurst side with only a light wind and fitful; then, keeping my stern in line with Cliff End Fort and steering NW. by W., we raced through the North Channel, where the tide soon lost half of its strength. But a nice little breeze came up at the right moment. Away to the south the Shingles stood dry out of the water. The passage by this channel is indeed between the devil and the deep sea, for you must not get too near the Hurst side or you become unmanageable in the strong eddy by the shore, and if you edge just a little too far the other side you get ashore on the Shingles.

Steering the NW. by W. course till Milford Church tower, just visible in the trees, bore NNE. ½ E., I then altered the direction to W. by S., which allowed half a point for the tide, and would also bring me sufficiently east of the Christchurch Ledge Buoy to avoid the overfalls. We had passed Hurst at 3.45, and the next nine miles were done in an hour and a quarter, for we had the

Christchurch Lodge Buoy abeam and nicely to leeward at five o'clock.

I have had occasion to say nothing recently concerning the dinghy. She had lately behaved herself quite nicely, and we had always towed her with a double painter attached to both of the yacht's quarters since the Beachy Head incident. But coming through the race off Hurst she must have shipped some water through the slot for the centreboard, and in Christchurch Bay I noticed she went down at the stern with her bows high up in the air. The strain on the tow ropes was very great, and; being almost awash, she was impeding our way considerably, so I hove-to and with some difficulty got her alongside and emptied most of the water out of her. Under main eased off, with foresail drawing and jib hauled a-weather, *Vivette*, in spite of being cut away considerably at the forefoot, rode hove-to without any heed being paid to the tiller, which I did not lash. This will no doubt be a great convenience someday.

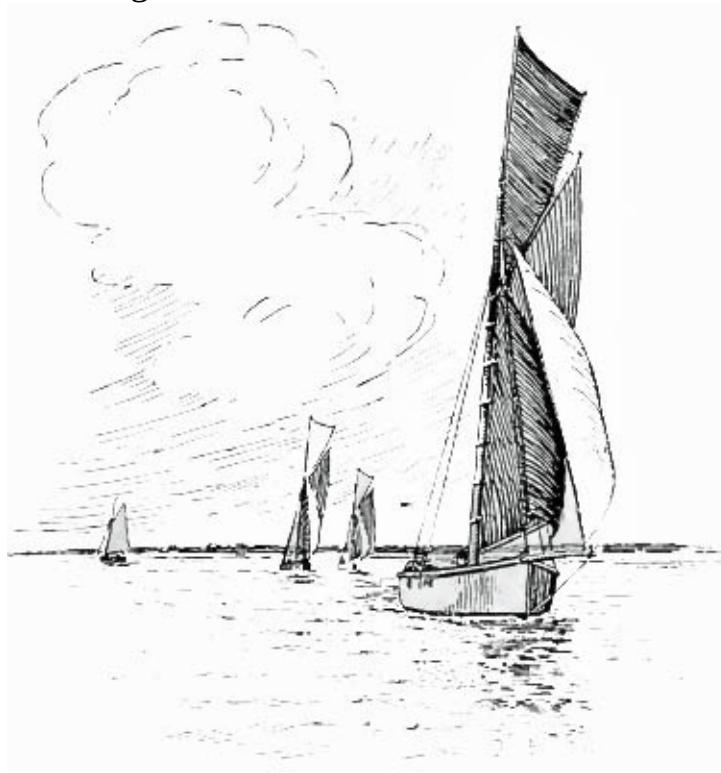
With just so much wind as we could stand without having to reef, we now steered due west for Handfast Point, running dead before the wind, so that with a certain amount of rolling it was not easy to keep the ship from gybing. I had never been into Poole before, but I had met a man who had wrecked his ship just outside, and I had heard tales from others of what the entrance could be like.

But the day was beautifully fine, although there was a good deal of swell, which I understand always gets up here when the wind is in the east. We had carried the tide all the way from Calshot, but the ebb was still running out from Poole, so I steered a little to the north-east of Old Harry Rock, then, picking up the Bar Buoy, went straight on for the Marconi telegraph-post, entering Sand-Banks at slack water at 7.30, or six hours from Calshot, including the time hove-to in bailing out the dinghy. As we got inside the estuary, with its puzzling channels, the leading lights were made visible, so, steering NE. by E. until nearly up to the light, I altered the course to due north, passed Parkstone Pier, and brought up in Parkstone Lake. Entering the latter at dead low water springs in the dark, we got picked up by the mud, although my Admiralty Chart gave the depth as 11 feet, which is obviously wrong. However, we only remained stuck for about a quarter of an hour.

Here we were made the recipients of the most generous hospitality on the part of the members of the Parkstone Sailing Club, one of the keenest and most sportive lot of yachtsmen I have met. They have a convenient clubhouse at the end of what is practically a private creek, and a useful workshop attached to the building. There is only one drawback to this sweet spot, and that is the lack of water in the lake, but the best water seemed to be about thirty yards inside in mid-stream.

Poole Harbour, with its wonderful mixture of Italian and Scotch scenery,

fascinated me so much that I decided to remain there for the present. Such sunrises, such sunsets, such blues and greens and golden reds I have never seen. From where we were anchored in Parkstone we had the most delightful view imaginable; sandbanks and tufts of green grass to our left, Brownsea Island, with its lofty fir-trees, in front, and behind us a stretch of well-wooded hillocks, while in between was the broad estuary that carried all sorts of craft past our cabin-door. The Parkstone Sailing Club gave me some excellent racing on board the Babe, which I found out later had originally come round from Essex also. Finally, as the autumn was beginning, I laid the *Vivette* up after some weeks, so that this might be a convenient starting-port for my cruise next year, when, if the Fates were kind, I wanted to continue my voyage down Channel to the attractive waters in the Falmouth neighbourhood.



#### POOLE FISHING BOATS

Going out for the night to the fishing-grounds

It had been a splendid summer, and I had not a fault to find with *Vivette*. I had been in and out of all sorts of ports without ever a paid-hand or pilot. I had learnt much about human nature, about the sea, about its shipping. I had learnt to love my boat and her little ways, and, finally, to quote Ruskin in words to which I think most yachtsmen will add their agreement —

“I say, without any manner of doubt, that a ship is one of the loveliest things man ever made, and one of the noblest; nor do I know any lines, out of divine

work, so lovely as those of the head of a ship, or even as the sweep of the timbers of a small boat, not of a race boat, a mere floating chisel, but a broad, strong, sea boat, able to breast a wave and break it."



LAUNCH OF "VIVETTE" AT POOLE

## CHAPTER VI

### FROM POOLE TO WEYMOUTH

I WENT down to Dorset once during the winter to have a look at *Vivette* snugly housed under her shed till the weather would tempt us afloat again. Further improvements and repairs were made to increase her efficiency, and these included such items as alterations to the rudder- and channel-plates, recaulking deck-seams, adding chocks on the port side in which the bower-anchor rests securely when not in use, while it is ready always for being thrown overboard in a hurry. A new bowsprit was added, and, instead of the old fixed bobstay, I had it so arranged that, when at anchor or at moorings, this could be hauled up. Lying in Parkstone Lake the previous summer, when the wind and tide were so disposed, the chafing of the cable against the bobstay was so great that I determined this improvement should be made, and most useful it was found to be, for in the new cruise it was almost always a case of riding to one's anchor instead of being tied up against a quay in harbour. New topmast stays were installed to replace the old ones, new rigging was given *Vivette* wherever any seemed doubtful, and where this was not essential it was thoroughly overhauled. Spars were cleaned and received three coats of varnish, the ballast again painted with red oxide, the cabin varnished inside and out, the forecastle painted a nice sea-green to add a touch of colour below, while the tanks were

cleaned out with lime. In order to make the decks thoroughly tight they were dressed with a preparation of red ochre and oil, which, as soon as it had properly dried, was found to be quite a success. Hitherto the decks had been varnished, but the sea water soon made them bare again. The red ochre colour, how-ever, not only wore well, but was not unsightly, for it matched the colour of *Vivette*'s sails, and saved a good deal of work in keeping the ship clean, an advantage that we appreciated many times. The hull of the ship below the water-line was scraped and covered again with anti-fouling composition, while the topsides were rubbed down, and received two coats of white paint and one of enamel, while the dinghy was also cleaned, painted, and varnished.

However, in spite of careful preparations and regard for time, *Vivette* was not ready as soon as she should have been. The winter and early spring had been characterised by a series of cold, easterly winds, which had so thoroughly dried all the craft laid up ashore as to go through them "like a chisel," as the Dorsetshiremen put it. Consequently when the yacht was first launched it was some time before she "took up," and a serious leak manifesting itself, she had to be put on the cradle again and examined. It was soon discovered that the defect came from the garboard strake, but this was thoroughly caulked, made perfectly tight, and we arrived from town one afternoon at the end of May in time to see her going down the slipway, and take the water again for the continuation of her cruise to the westward. But even then so much had to be done in the way of stowing the ballast properly, so as to get her to her right water-line, that all we had time to do was a preliminary sail down to that delightful corner of the many-armed bights and bays of the extensive Poole Harbour known as South Deep, where we anchored for the night. We returned the next day in a miserable and incessant rain, with the weather cold and depressing. There were still several little things needing the attention of the ship-wright, and these were to be seen to against our return in a fortnight. It is better to be sure than sorry, and, next to a seaworthy hull, nothing gives one so much confidence in a breeze as to know that all the gear is good and more than able to bear any reasonable strain to be put upon it.



SOU' DEEP, POOLE HARBOUR

We found plenty to interest us in the meantime looking round Poole and its shipping, and incidentally much to learn. Even when we came down again, this time to set forth in earnest, there was much to be done in getting a full assortment of all kinds of stores both for the yacht and ourselves; but at last, with lockers and watertanks well filled, and all gear in the best condition, we dropped down again to Sou' Deep, where we rode to our anchor for another day, hoping that the westerly wind would soon go round so as to allow us a chance of going on to Devonshire. We were very happy none the less in this quiet, out-of-the-way corner of the world, with none of the sounds of the town, but a curious mixture of Broadland and Scotch scenery, high ranges of hills, green and wooded islands, lagoons and stray cottages on one side, but the open sea on the other, with the white cliffs of the Isle of Wight in the far distance. During the too short time that we spent at this anchorage my new mate — the artist who has here enlivened my dull prose with his spirited sketches — and I enjoyed ourselves to the fullest human capacity. We were going to leave the world and its worries alone, we thought; we would come back here in the winter, build a little hut just above the sandy beach on one of the islets, hew down the pine trees for our fuel, fish in the water for our sustenance, or creep up and down the silent creeks after water-fowl. I went up one day and dared to land at Goathorn Pier to beg a pailful of water with which to make up the amount we had already consumed. Here a family had lived apart from the doubtful advantages of town life for years, and the proud mother told me she would regret to have to leave what seemed to one a genuine "Peter Pan" kind of cottage among the trees in the very heart of the Never-Never Land. Then there were jolly dinghy sails among these quaint waterways, while the mate sketched and tried to catch the fleeting scenic effects which quickly come and as quickly go. There were night interests too, as, for instance, when smoking on deck, and talking in almost a whisper, we suddenly heard in the distance seaward a puffing and blowing and splashing in rhythmical

rotation.

"Porpoises!"

It was a very dark, moonless night, and they were coming up at a great pace against a sluicing ebb-tide. No wonder they are able to give impudence to liners and play saucily round their bows. No wonder porpoises can do their 20 knots. On they came, passing within a few yards of us, holding straight on their course until a loud thrashing and splashing a quarter of a mile ahead told us they had got a ground in the shallow water off Goathorn Pier. That was evidently the end of their evening's cruise, for they presently got off and passed again at the same distance, tearing down to the sea with the added force of the tide.

So it came that after an early breakfast we determined to go out to the sea, too. We slipped out of the narrow harbour entrance, past Old Harry, reaching right out to sea on a SSW. course till about nine miles from Handfast Point, getting a "fix" of our position by the cross bearings of Durlstone Head and the distant St. Alban's. But the tide had carried us a good way to leeward, and when we came about on the other tack and close-hauled on a course that would have cleared the outside of the St. Alban's Race and led us on for Weymouth we were making so little headway, the wind gradually headed us so persistently, and the sky began to look so threatening, that we eased our sheets and ran back again to Sou' Deep.

But on June 15 we had better fortune. Leaving our anchorage at high water, we had cleared Sand-Banks at 8.30 A.M. Old Harry was abeam at 9, Peveril Ledge at 9.30, and St. Alban's Head an hour later. With a nice whole sail breeze from SE. by E., and a fair tide all the way, we were in Weymouth by 1.30, having covered the whole distance within five hours. We were told beforehand of the surprising beauties of the coast-line from Poole to our new port, and our informants had not exaggerated. Swanage tucked away in its pretty bay, Tilly Whim Caves beyond, then the few miles of rocky scenery with patches of yellow and green above on to the towering St. Alban's Head, followed by the glorious, massive cliffs which bend round in a majestic sweep gradually to form Weymouth Bay. This was indeed a day of delight, with a powerful sunshine and a fair wind. We set the balloon staysail off Durlstone, and the wind and tide sent us "boosting along," as a Poole fisherman prophesied they would. We had been told that by keeping close into the land off the dreaded St. Alban's Head we should avoid any of the unpleasant race, but we found that to be not so, for though we were so near that we could have thrown the proverbial biscuit on to the rocks ashore, there was a very obvious tide-rip present. Not that there was anything to hurt on so calm and pleasant a day, but the roar of the water, and the curious slap-slap against the dinghy's sides, and the slight difference it made to

the steering of the helm, were mildly suggestive of what this locality could be when the race was at its worst and an on-shore gale was blowing in the dark winter days. For the benefit of the general reader who may not have had intimate experience of a race, I may be permitted to remark that this is a space of disturbed water found off various headlands, caused by the unevenness of the bottom of the sea. Many headlands have a race in a minor or less degree. Flamborough Head in Yorkshire, for instance, Orfordness in Suffolk, Hurst Point opposite the Needles, are among the milder ones, while that which is found in Pentland Firth in Scotland and off Portland Bill in England are at certain times positively dangerous. But even the less excitable tide-races can, when the wind is against tide, make themselves thoroughly objectionable to small craft.

In making the passage with a fair tide, as we did out of Poole bound to the westward, one has to bear in mind and allow for the strength of the stream off the southern arm of Swanage Bay, or one would be set on to the rocks off Peveril Point; but by day this can easily be avoided by keeping outside the black-and-white chequered buoy. Then just round the corner Anvil Point Lighthouse comes into view, looking as if it were trying hard to balance itself on tip-toe near the edge of the cliff. From there a course of W. by N. leads you to St.Alban's Headland, on which there is not, as perhaps one would have supposed, any sort of light, but a signalling station. And so setting the yacht on a NW. by W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  W. course we had got round the head, and sailed gaily past Kimeridge and Warbarrow Bays, with the sea a delicious emerald-green, so clean and clear in comparison with the water off the east coast. Lulworth Cove was soon abeam, and away to the westward the haze lifted and revealed the high land on Portland, looking for all the world like a headland turned round the wrong way — facing inland instead of seaward. We passed a few fishermen and a big yawl-rigged yacht beating the other way, but otherwise the sea was our own, and holding on our course the distant piers of Weymouth in time showed themselves; so, not having even seen the place before, we lowered staysail as we got to the entrance, and were running comfortably in under jib and main when one of the big Great Western steam packets bound for the Channel Islands was seen to be blocking up the harbour with her thick warp across, so we dodged about beyond the pier outside till she had gone, and then, following the harbourmaster's instructions, ran right up the narrowing gut and moored alongside *Donah*, an auxiliary motor yacht of about our own tonnage.

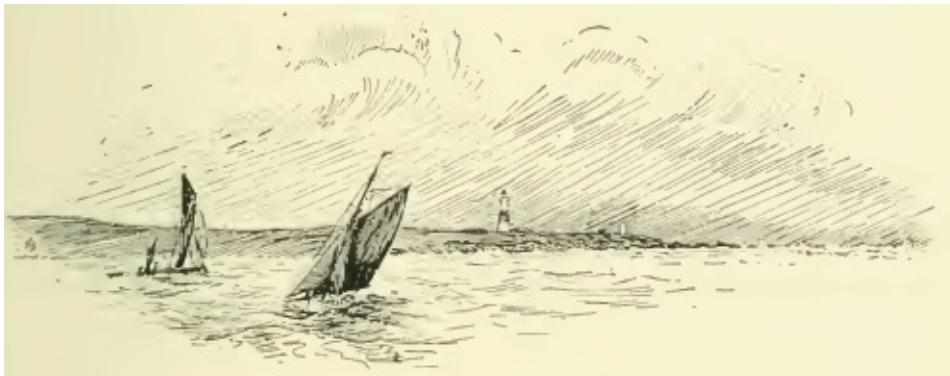


“VIVETTE” AND “DONAH” LYING IN WEYMOUTH HARBOUR

## CHAPTER VII

### FROM WEYMOUTH TO DARTMOUTH

WEYMOUTH is a nice old-fashioned watering-place, with plenty to look at in the harbour and a fine front along the bay, so we spent the time pleasantly here exchanging yarns with the owner of *Donah*, doing a few odd jobs to *Vivette*, re-filling her water-tanks and getting stores aboard, going for walks, and two days after we had arrived started off again. We turned out of our cots at 5.30 A.M., had breakfast, and in a heavy mist, which was soon dispersed when the sun got up, cleared the harbour mouth at 7.15 with a gentle wind a little east of north. We were hoping to reach the Bill of Portland when the tide was slack, and to creep inside between the dreaded race and the land. But unless the wind would freshen a bit this did not seem to be likely. We ran through the spacious Portland Harbour, entering at the northern end and coming out the other side, thus saving at least a mile. It is a vast anchorage, and this morning looked bigger still, for the fleet were away at manoeuvres, and only a few odd ships remained in possession. As we passed through the sun began to warm the atmosphere, a pilot cutter was putting to sea through the eastern entrance, and a yacht was getting her sails up. As soon as we were out through the southern entrance we began to get a better draught of wind. Away over to the south-east we could hear the Shambles Lightvessel blowing her siren in the fog, but we never saw her.

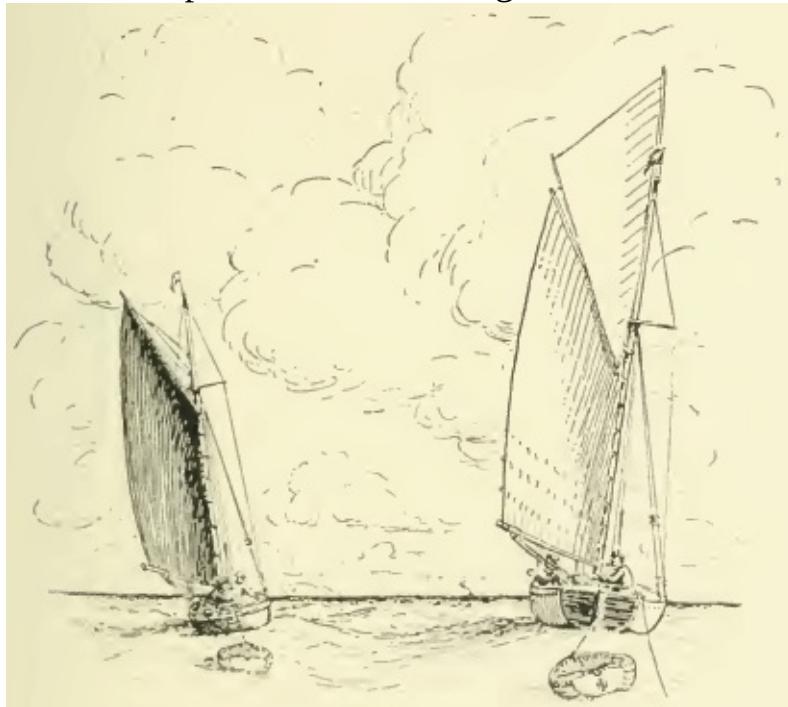


BOUND WEST, OFF PORTLAND BILL

By a quarter past nine, two hours after leaving Weymouth, we had made so much headway that we were at the extremity of Portland Bill, where we found

the wind to be northerly and very light indeed. The tide was just slack, so we could not have hit off our time better; indeed, there were a few open boats peacefully fishing off the rocks when we passed. But the tide would soon be making to the westward, and the race would not delay its coming long. So, with every anxiety to hurry on, we made the best of the light air, which was backing more to NW., and were just able to keep *Vivette* on her course W. by N., with presently a fair tide under us. A Thames barge, bound eastward, was doing her best to creep round the Bill before the tide got too strong, and with all her canvas up, and the wind still backing to the W. of N., she just did it. But two bigger vessels astern of her, seeing they would be too late, bore up and ran out to sea, intending to clear the race to the southward. About the time we cleared the Bill *Donah* was leaving Weymouth under power, bound for Lyme Regis; but though we watched carefully with our glasses, we failed to see her. At 11.23 we took a bearing of the Bill E. by S., and now getting very dim in the mist and distance. At one o'clock the yacht we had seen getting under weigh as we passed through Portland, with a topsail up, came abreast as the wind dropped utterly and we lay becalmed. We hailed each other and found the *Mildred*, an 8-ton, transomed stern cutter, with her owner, a friend, and a couple of paid-hands on board, was, like ourselves, bound for Torquay. Our log was not working; it had been damaged the first day we had put to sea from Poole, and the spare part which we had wired to town for had not reached us at Weymouth as we had hoped, so our distance had to be done by guesswork and the known rate of the tide. We estimated we had come about thirteen to fifteen miles from the Bill, and *Mildred*, who had his log out, agreed that the latter was about the correct distance. For most of two hours we were becalmed in the middle of West Bay, with occasional draughts from the westward and north-west. Sometimes we got a little puff, and then it died away again. The day was gloriously hot, but it was tantalising to be here wasting valuable time, making practically no headway, with the useful power of the tide quickly running out. *Mildred* went about and stood in for the shore, but it seemed advisable to us to go farther out to sea on the chance of finding more wind, which soon showed itself to be the case, and at 3.15, unable to lie any better than N. by W., and estimating Torbay to bear about WNW., we went about on the other tack and picked up a little breeze. We had clearly done the right thing, for *Mildred* was now several miles to leeward. By 4.30, having stood in to the land so that we could identify Golden Cape, we tacked ship again, and the wind veering so that we could comfortably lie due W., we put her on that course, and the breeze freshening gradually till it was all that we could ask for, *Vivette* heeled to it, and away we went, soon leaving our "chummy" hull-down and out of sight. We had sighted a point to the westward, which we could not

identify with any certainty, but supposed it to be Hope's Nose at the northern arm of Torbay, but, as the reader will see presently, we were mistaken, being slightly to southward of the position we had imagined.



"MILDRED" AND "VIVETTE" BECALMED IN WEST BAY

We dined very early, and found that the new arrangement of having the Primus on gimbals, and swinging quite happily in spite of the angle at which the yacht was now heeling, workeds plendifidly. When we were about to do a passage, with the chance of not reaching port before nightfall, we usually fill the Wellbank Cooker with meat and vegetables, bring the Primus and gimbals into the cabin in readiness, and, when wanted, get the stove to work, and a delicious hot dinner is ready as soon as we are. It is wonderful what amount of new life and energy a hot meal is capable of putting into one, and the pleasures of a night-passage are multiplied a thousandfold. The brave breeze was now making up for time lost earlier in the day, and we reeled the knots off in excellent style, taking it in turns to relieve each other and go below to the feast awaiting us. An Irish stew, a little weak brandy and soda, some fruit, and a pipe — there is not much more that one wants in order to dine pleasantly, if simply, while the orchestra of the wind through the rigging, and the splashing of the waters as the ship goes through the waves, gladden the heart and mind of man. But nearer in shore, while we were congratulating ourselves, a tragedy was taking place, as we learned afterwards. In one of the little puffs that would come down on us now and again, and cause us to luff up a little, an open sailing craft two miles off

Teignmouth capsized, and seven lives were lost, including two local pilots. Of course it was the old story of having made the sheet fast.

As the hour of sunset grew nearer the wind came more off shore and freshened, but the pace was most exhilarating. We passed a few of the fine, big Brixham ketches bound the opposite way: most picturesque they looked with their brown canvas and big staysails pursuing their dignified way over the dark blue waves. There was just a chance that we might save our daylight into Torquay if the wind held, and so, parodying the Gloucester fishermen in "Captains Courageous," we began to sing to ourselves —

"Now Thatcher Rock comes into view,  
Oh, Hope's Nose Point, and how are you?  
Soon the German band we'll hear  
At anchor in Torbay."

For the point we had taken for Hope's Nose was coming very near now. It was sixteen or seventeen years since I had last been in this district, and the distinguishing marks of the land were not clearly in my memory. The engraving showing the contour of the coast given at the bottom of the Admiralty chart was confusing in that it omitted to show the day-mark which leads one to the entrance of Dartmouth. Furthermore, the red sunset behind the cliffs made them take on an appearance that was all the more difficult to discriminate. But just as we had got close into the land, and I began to realise that we had overshot our course, a bright light suddenly flashed from what I had taken for Hope's Nose, followed by another flash from a light farther down to the westward. I knew at once then that the former was Berry Head, and the latter was the Start. We had thus come about a mile beyond the western arm of Torbay. With the twilight came a further increase in the wind from about NW., and the sea became a little bit lumpy. We went about, and began to stand out to sea again, but realising that it would be a beat right into Torquay, and that we now had a strong ebb-tide, after stowing the foresail, and rolling in the equivalent of about a reef and a half in the main, I decided to run for Dartmouth, for which we should have a fair wind and a fair tide as far as the entrance. This was a sudden change of our plans, and we were not prepared for it. I had not counted on entering Dartmouth except by daylight, and intended to have taken it on the way from Torquay. Consequently one had not studied the directions in the pilot book for entering. But it took only a few minutes to realise that we should find it impossible to get in for some hours yet. The tide would be ebbing pretty hotly, and the wind was blowing right out, and as every one is aware who has entered Dartmouth, the

currents are strong and uncertain, the wind is baffling, and the shore on either side is strewn with dangerous rocks. Soon the way down we lighted the binnacle, got the side-lights burning and hung out, and the riding-light kept handy in the cabin entrance.

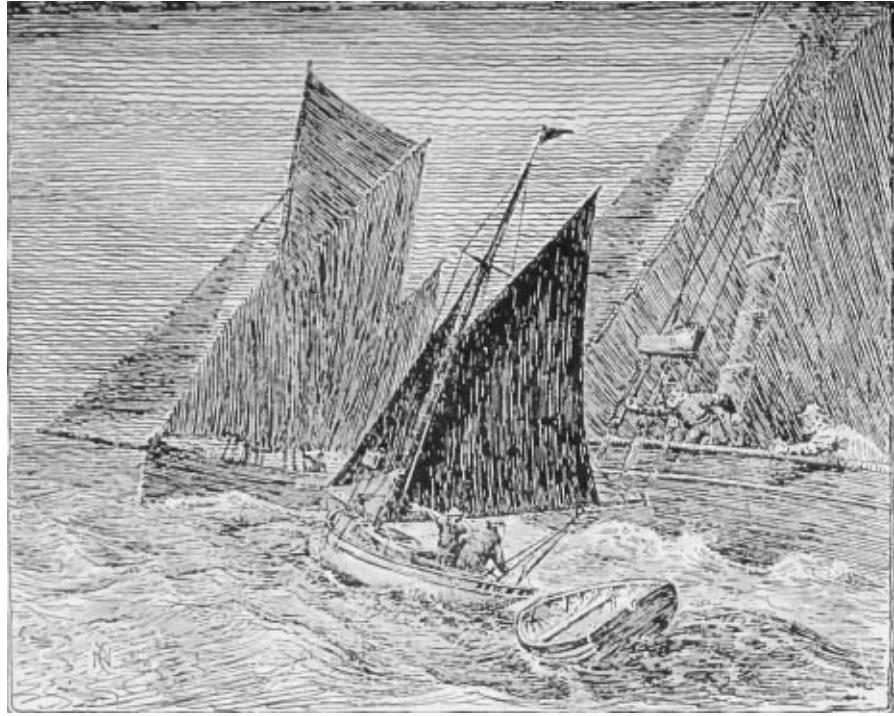
We knew it would be difficult to endeavour to get in, but we saw a cluster of Brixham “mumble-bees” and ketches making for the entrance, so at nine o’clock, being off Dartmouth, we resolved to follow them in, as they were probably beating in to land their fish before morning. It was fairly exciting work doing tack and tack with a crowd of these heavy craft within a few yards of us all the time. But as we followed them on we soon found that they only approached to a certain distance, and then came out again. Meanwhile the water seemed positively to be thickening with “mumble-bees.” From out of the darkness they suddenly seemed to spring as if by magic, causing us endless bother in looking out. We had now had a chance of reading up the pilotage directions, from which we gathered that as long as we kept in the leading white light we were in the fairway. As soon as the light showed red we were too far to the starboard shore: when it turned green we were getting among the rocks on the port side of the entrance. In the midst of all this one of the “mumble-bees” came unpleasantly close to us, and addressed us in rich, sonorous Devonshire accent —

“What the something, something did we want?”

We made answer that we were following them in to the harbour.

Another wave of language flowed over from the big black object to our little, white craft so many feet below. A few moments and we were positively surrounded by “mumble-bees” and ketches. It took us some minutes to realise what was happening, but from both sides they came romping along, most of them with no lights showing. This was becoming interesting. I decided to put out to sea again, and then to alter my course and run for Torbay. Just then a big fellow came ranging up on our starboard side, hanging out his side-lights as he advanced. I suggested to the mate that it would be well to make sure that both ours were burning brightly. He went forward to look.

The starboard one had gone out.



"WHAT THE SOMETHING, SOMETHING —?"

We soon got it to work, however, and stood away from the land, and then keeping just inside a line formed by the lights of Berry Head and Start Point, were able to keep parallel with the shore. We should get into Torquay, even though we should have to beat across the bay, sometime before breakfast time. Then if we got tired of beating we could run back, and make the entrance to Dartmouth in daylight with a flood-tide. But astern of us came the "mumble-bee." He could not manoeuvre so quickly as we, but he footed it faster when he got going. A fine selection of anathemas in advance told us who it was, though the night was very dark, and the cliffs increased the intensity of the blackness. In the first encounter, when we realised that they were going to smash us up if they could, it occurred to me to try a little bluff.

"We've got your number, old skipper; you'll be reported in the morning sure enough."

It was a lie obviously, for we couldn't have read his number nor his name in that lack of light. But the remark served as fuel to the flames, though the reason was not discovered till afterwards. But now he was clearly determined to stick to us and prevent us getting away. He was to seaward of us, and we were becoming hemmed in far too near to the shore. The Mewstone scarcely showed up against the darkness, and there were other islets and rocks to watch for. Suddenly from the sea a big west-country ketch came in sight. The "mumble-bee" shouted across to him, and the bigger vessel altered her course and came dead on for us,

handing us a few oaths as we luffed quickly and he shot under our stern, barely clearing the dinghy. We took counsel together, my mate and I. To continue as we were was to pursue an unequal contest. At the very least we should have our dinghy smashed, and very probably the *Vivette* holed and sunk. We had made enemies — for what reason we knew not — and being in the midst of a hostile fleet, very tired after our fifty-mile run and little sleep the night before, we felt the only thing was to capitulate and make the best terms we could. To keep this chase up all night, along a rocky treacherous coast, every inch and short cut of which were known to these local men, was not welcome, even though delightfully mediaeval in the nature of the sport. Perhaps these were the descendants of the crews of some of the ships that gave the Spanish Armada their whacking, and the same fighting spirit was evidently very much alive.

So we hove-to under the land and parlied.

“‘Mumble-bee’ ahoy. . . .”

“What d’ye want?”

“What’s this game you’re playing at?”

“Game . . . ?” Then a splutter of oaths.

“How much longer are you going to . . . ? Look here, we want a pilot . . . take us into Dartmouth . . . how much?”

There was a sound of subdued murmurings as one of the men walked aft. Then the same deep voice echoed back —

“Take yer in . . . ten bob.”

“Give you seven-and-six,” was *Vivette*’s reply.

The enemy refused to accept our suggestion, so thinking that hostilities would be renewed, we closed with the offer.

“Got a dinghy?” asked the “mumble-bee.”

“Yes; but it won’t carry you to-night.”

No more it would. There was enough motion to make it inadvisable to row about in a little eight-foot pram with a great, hefty seaman clambering in her from a heavy trawler, and he might have upset both of us, accustomed only to the heavier, deeper, beamier rowing-boat. So they launched theirs overboard, and soon from the black waves the dark object carrying two men shot out and bumped heavily alongside us. Two pairs of great strong hands gripped *Vivette*’s gunwale as their owners stood up in the rowing-boat.

“You said ten bob?” emphasised the familiar voice.

“Ten bob it is — come aboard.”

And shouting instructions to the disappearing boat, he stumbled into the well and took the tiller as we made for the harbour entrance again. In the cabin a light was burning dimly — turned low to avoid inconvenience in steering — and the

doors were just pulled-to. The pilot had scarcely been aboard when he pushed open the doors and looked in.

"Oh," he said cheerfully, as he withdrew his head, "I see it's all right. We thought you'd got a 'bogey-man' aboard."

We laughed faintly, not understanding the joke.

In the meantime we had begun tacking again off the entrance to the harbour. The stray "mumble-bees" and ketches collected together as they had done before, and came on over the waves like so many black monsters, with red and green eyes gleaming to port and starboard. The oaths began to be hurled at us again, but the pilot shouted back in a similar strain. Then —

"It's all right-t-t-t," he bellowed across to them.

"What's yer name?"

He gave it.

"What's the name of the yacht?"

"Don't answer," I whispered in his ear. He remained silent.

A few more hails from other trawlers, and at length, satisfied as to the identity of their pal, they gradually began to sheer away, and going about their business, left us in peace.

"It's all right, I tell you," he shouted over the side again as we passed the last. "It's all right. I've stole a shirt off the pilot," he remarked gleefully. Then turning to me, "Us fellows 'asn't no right to take you into Dartmouth."

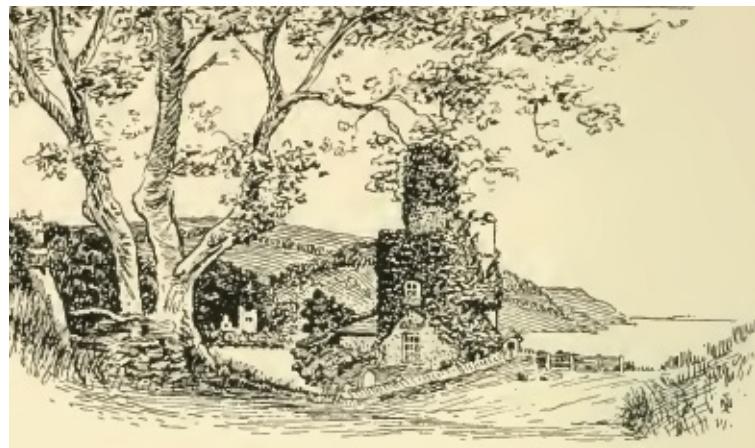
"Oh," I answered. "Then why did you come aboard?"

"We can't take you no farther than the Range; besides, the ebb won't be done for an hour or two. . . . Can y' see the buoy yet?"

I went forward and kept a keen look-out, but none of us saw it till we had passed, so dark was it under the high cliffs. We dodged backwards and forwards stemming the tide and making head-way slowly, the Brixham man taking us well inside both the red and green lights, but to him every bit of the entrance was as an open book: he could almost smell the rocks in the night. And so at eleven o'clock we let go anchor off the Pin Rock in about five fathoms, a little distance below where the Pilots' Moorings are marked on the chart, and just inside the red light, so out of the fairway, but sufficiently exposed as to be able to see the Start Light blinking away to the west down the coast. I settled up with the pilot, who seemed anxious to disclaim all knowledge of the first encounter; but his voice bewrayed him. Furthermore, he did protest too much. In point of fact I had been able to discern neither the number nor the name of his ship — though they carry each of these marks of identification — and to ask him bluntly was fruitless. But I was determined to find out none the less; so, taking a roundabout route, beginning by talking generally about the fishing-fleets of the west-country, then

coming down to praise the fine ships sailing out of Brixham, narrowing the subject still more to the “mumble-bees,” getting him to talk about their build and rig, and so on, I got him off his guard once, and before he had time to realise it he had told me the name of his ship. I didn’t get the number, and he quickly saw that he had already said too much, but it was all that I wanted to know for future remembrance. His own vessel had followed us behind into the Range, and she sent her boat off for him. We gave him a drink before he went over the side again, and one to the younger man in the boat, and away they went back to resume their night’s fishing.

Left to ourselves once more, and seeing that the anchor was holding well, though with wind against tide, as soon as the flood made we should certainly sweep round somewhat, we went below and made some good strong cocoa, after which neither of us could keep awake. But with slackwater at 3 A.M., and the night nearly ending, we broke out the anchor and sailed in through the high land, between the two picturesque castles, keeping well in the white light of the fairway, and brought up off Kingswear in a little under three fathoms. As we wished to remain here some time we laid out a kedge, so that she was securely moored in case it blew during the next few days. At 5.30, having been out of bed for twenty-four hours exactly, we turned in, and slept peacefully till one o’clock, glad to have crossed West Bay and to have got so far into Devonshire.



ENTRANCE TO DARTMOUTH HARBOUR

## CHAPTER VIII

### FROM DARTMOUTH TO SALCOMBE

THE joy of being back again in Devonshire after so many years, and the opportunities afforded of revisiting the nooks and corners so dear to one's youth — the coves where one used to bathe, the shop where one used to buy cream and fruit — made one in no hurry to get away from this landlocked harbour. There was so much to see, re-see, and to think about; we were so hospitably entertained, so fascinated with the contents of the harbour, that we had barely time to get in all that we wished in one week. It was well, too, that we had arrived in a sheltered haven, for the weather broke again, and for several days it blew very hard, and out in the Channel we learned that there was more sea and wind than we wanted. Even the Brixham trawlers went about their work with a couple of reefs tucked in, and these dreadnought men aren't exactly wind-shy. But of course they carried their topsails over reefed main: they say it steadies the gaff in a seaway. The complaint of these men is usually that there is not wind enough for them, and it would have to be a very strong gale that saw them douse topsail because of the wind. Those who have ever seen the Brixham men racing round Torbay in a breeze during the annual regatta realise something of their capabilities.

But before the weather got lively we were joined by several other small craft. The *Mooween*, whose owner I had met the previous year at Hamble, came slowly up the harbour after making a long passage from Poole to Dartmouth, including all night. She was followed presently by the *Lady Moll*, who was cruising in company, but had been down to the Start and boxed about uncomfortably in a fog before coming in to Dartmouth. *Mooween* was slightly bigger than *Lady Moll*, and had shipped a paid-hand for this cruise. *Lady Moll* was a little bigger than *Vivette*, being sailed in a most sportive way by her owner and his wife, who set but little account on all-night passages and other minor details of endurance. *Mooween* was a sloop, built by Luke of Hamble, with a transom stern, and exceptionally comfortable accommodation for her size. *Lady Moll* was also sloop-rigged, having been designed by Linton Hope, with a plentiful amount of headroom, afforded by means of a curving cabin-top. At first sight she seemed to be far more suitable for Solent cruising, but her ample

freeboard and her sea-keeping qualities proved her to be more than a pretty toy. About the same time arrived also the *Joybird*, a little 6-ton yawl, also cruising with only owner and “owneress” on board. So, forming ourselves into a sort of mutual admiration society, we spent the time very pleasantly visiting each other’s yachts, exchanging yachting lies, learning a new idea here, a novel gadget there, and generally confounding the cold, miserable weather which had set in. Although it was the month of June, and we were so far to the south of England, we were not sorry to have the enjoyment of our peat-stove burning away in the cabin at night.

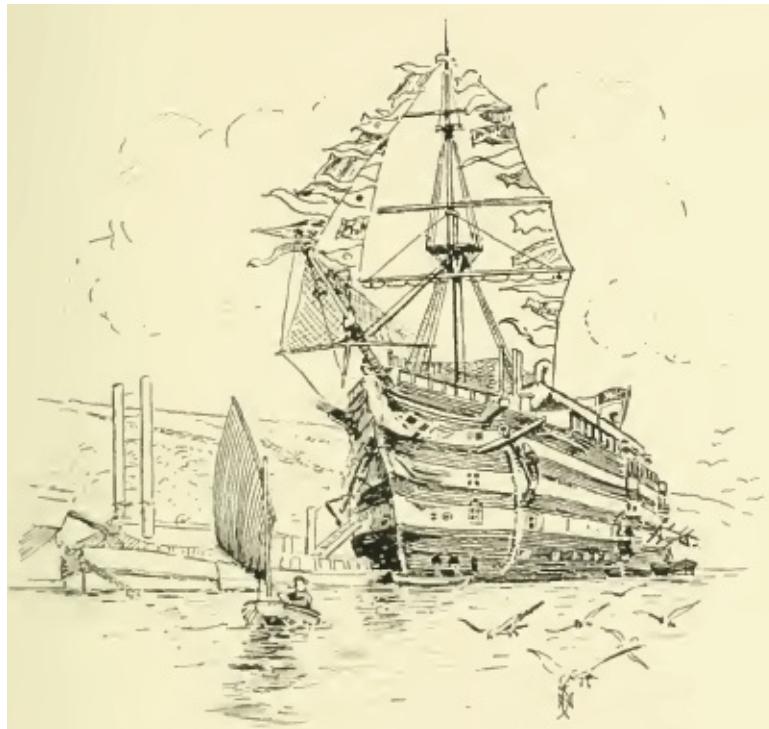
With this little fleet had arrived also the *Iris*, an 100-ton trading ketch, who had come out of Poole with *Mooween* and *Lady Moll*, bound for Plymouth. She had brought up astern of us, but far too near to be pleasant, and more than once, at the turn of the tide, we had to get out from our cots and do some fending off. She carried a skipper, mate, and boy, all of them having taken a keen sporting interest in their race with *Mooween* and *Lady Moll*, from whom the *Iris* had become separated during the night. They yarneled about the Teignmouth disaster, and knew the pilot who had charge of the sunken boat. Weather-bound, like all of us, they busied themselves all the time, and had scraped and varnished mast and topmast, and done a good deal of other work before putting to sea again.

One day, whilst lunching with one of the Harbour Commissioners, and a keen yachtsman, we were relating the experience we had enjoyed off the entrance to Dartmouth, and inquired what the local definition of a “bogey-man” was. In the next few minutes we soon understood why we had been treated by the Brixham trawlers in so curious a manner. It appears that the fishing industry had been getting worse and worse, so, contrary to all regulations forbidding trawling within a line drawn from outside Dartmouth to the Start, the practice had begun of pursuing their industry where we had first discovered them just off the harbour entrance. Warnings having been disregarded, and fines having been levied without any abatement of the wrongdoing, it was made clear that the next offence would be punished by confiscation of nets and gear. The inspecting official charged with the duty of keeping an eye on delinquents had recently been compelled to go out in a powerful, sea-going tug. But he had been recognised, the “mumble-bees” in their anger had charged straight down on to the powerful tug, and, with their mighty bowsprits, had succeeded in knocking in two of the steel plates, so that the steamvessel had to hurry back to port, and her owners declined to charter her again for a similar purpose. On another occasion the inspector was compelled to beat a very hasty retreat, and it was only by good luck and the condition of the tide that he was able to run his craft in between one of the islands and the land, where the trawler could not follow, that he got back

safely. Consequently all sorts of unsuspicious-looking craft had to be employed to outwit the men of Brixham. Another friend of ours, who was peacefully fishing from a motor-boat, was similarly taken for a “bogey-man,” and only with difficulty succeeded in convincing the trawlers of his identity.

Knowing not a word of any of these internal troubles, *Vivette* had arrived on the scene that night, and, seeing us dodging about the harbour mouth, where they were illegally trawling, then finding we were standing off and on, whilst we were really waiting for the tide to ease, they had made sure we were none other than the “bogey-man” himself, this time out in the disguise of a yacht, and, in the opinion of myself and mate, confirmed by those to whom we related the incident at Dartmouth, there can be no doubt but that, unless we had hove-to when we did, one of those heavy bowsprits, with ample weight and impetus behind it, was meant to crash through *Vivette* and send us to the bottom. Having discovered their mistake when too late it would have been easy enough to explain that it was an accident, or that the yacht was in the wrong. Even if we ourselves should have been picked up, would the evidence of the sworn enemies of the “bogey-man” have been on our side? I doubt not. A week or two later one of these trawlers did crash into a big yacht lying anchored off Torquay. It was night, and although the yacht’s riding-light was burning brightly and the weather clear, the skipper got confused, cut the yacht down to the water, and only by a miracle of good luck were the owner and his lady got out before the lighter vessel sank to the bottom.

Feeling energetic one day after arriving in Dartmouth I took a delightful walk along the coast to Brixham, so timing my arrival as to watch the fishing-fleet getting under weigh in the evening; but some of the ships had just gone round the breakwater, and I could not with any certainty recognise our friend off the “mumble-bee,” though I did identify the big ketch that had so closely shaved our stern, for I had noticed a patch in his mizzen of material lighter than the tanned canvas, and there he was this afternoon with sails up, riding to his moorings, curtseying so gently to the swell as if incapable of doing one pennyworth of harm to “bogey-man” or yachtsman alike.



H.M.S. "BRITANNIA" IN THE DART

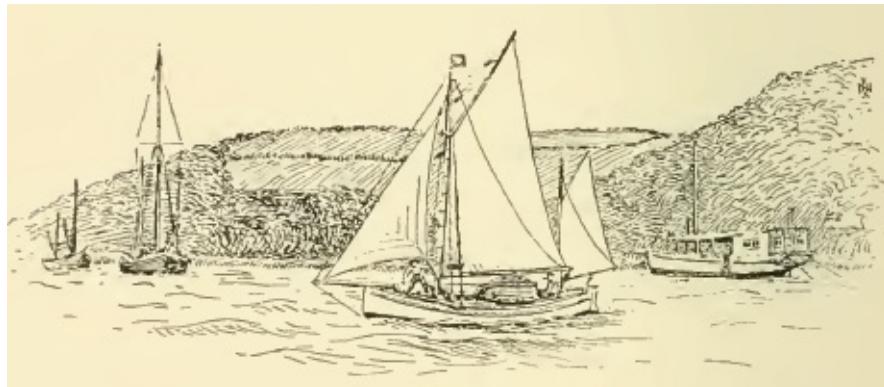
There were enjoyable little voyages, too, in the dinghy, sailing up to Dittisham, and enjoying the famous Devonshire dough-nuts and cream, being not a little amused at the seamanship displayed by the cadets from the *Britannia* as they heroically endeavoured to make the prehistoric sailing-boats with which they are still supplied go against wind and tide. But Dartmouth is full of interesting obsolescents of all sorts. Apart from the old *Britannia*, there are some fine old hulks, now used for storing coal, but at one time they sailed the seas as gallant clippers, East Indiamen, still picturesque even though covered with coal-dust. Here, too, somewhere in the stream must have lain the famous old carack, *Madre de Dios*, which readers of Hakluyt will remember was captured by Ralegh's men and brought into Dartmouth. So immense was she that she drew nearly as much as the modern *Mauretania*, but had been so lightened of her rich contents that on running in between the two old castles which guard the Dart she drew only twenty-six feet. Still, this was a big enough draught for a 1600-ton ship. "By which perfect commensuration of the parts," concludes Hakluyt, "appeareth the hugenesse of the whole, farre beyond the mould of the biggest shipping used among us either for warre or receipt." As we swung to our anchor we used to think many times of the scenes when the great Elizabethan sailors must have attracted the whole population of Dartmouth to the water's side to speed them on their exciting journeys, or to welcome them back with the bells

from the old church ringing, streamers flying, men cheering, and women dancing for joy as the big clumsy old ships came carefully in through the narrow entrance towering on either side with rocks and high trees. We walked out to the old castle of St. Petrox, and looked down. But the old high-pooped ship of the sixteenth century was vivid in one's imagination, even if, instead, a smart modern yawl with overhanging bow and stern was coming up the same fairway in which the *Madre de Dios* and thousands of other bluff-bowed ships had pushed their way through the water into the Dart.



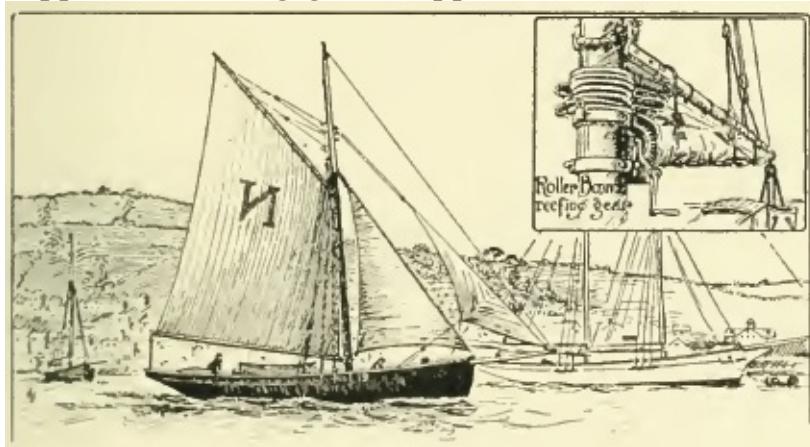
THE "MADRE DE DIOS" COMING INTO DARTMOUTH

We made the acquaintance of the owners of the *Gipsy*, a fine old Fife yacht, now used as a houseboat for summer and winter alike. Sometimes in the winter ships who lay where the *Iris* was brought up showed their respect for a Fife ship by breaking away from their anchors and crashing into the houseboat, to the consternation of its inhabitants. One of these happened to be a trader, weather-bound, on which the principles of economical living must surely have been carried out with a brilliance rarely found on shore. "Yus," related the old skipper as he yarneled away to the *Gipsies*, " 'tain't no sort of weather this. 'Ere we are, me and my mate's been out a fortnight, and it's cost the two of us a big hole in ten bob for grub alone." It isn't often you can boast of having entered a lady's drawing-room in ancient clothes and heavy sea-boots, but the weather was boisterous, the dinghy full of water, and our host and hostess most charitably gave us a plenary dispensation and the kindest Devonshire welcome.



HOUSE-BOAT "GIPSY," WITH "STELLA MARIS" IN FOREGROUND

Three of the Bristol Channel pilot cutters came in while we were in Dartmouth, and showed how easily they could be handled in a crowded anchorage. We rowed round them admiring their gear, and the mate, making friends with one of them, was asked on board. No yachting-trip this kind of work can be in the winter, when two men race out in each ship round Land's End keen to be the first to get the job of piloting a big steamer into port. Only two men, and one of them gets the dinghy overboard and rows off to the big liner, clammers in, kicks the dinghy off from the great steel side, leaving the other man to come down presently, heave-to and get the dinghy on board again. Then, literally single-handed, the man that is left sails his ship back day and night to his harbour. No wonder the lead of the ropes is made as handy as possible and the value of the Appledore reefing-gear is appreciated.



BRISTOL CHANNEL PILOT CUTTER

In Dartmouth, with schooner yacht *Orelia* to the right of picture.

Inset shows the pilot cutter's roller boom reefing-gear

Presently there was a general consultation between the skippers of the three ships as two of them rowed off to the third. A short delay, and they rowed back hurriedly. The cables were shortened in, up went the mainsails and head-sails,

the anchors were broken out, and away they went out into the Channel, but I noticed they did not omit to roll in a reef or two, and the Bristol pilots can stand wind.

But Dartmouth seemed to attract to its shelter all kinds of ships and men. A venerable bishop was seen at the helm of a fast motor-boat, daily besporting himself off the harbour mouth; surely an extraordinary combination of the old and the new. There were steamers of all sizes continually coming in from the sea to take aboard enough coal to carry them on to the end of their journey. One vessel blew his siren for most of the night as it seemed, but no one came out to pilot him in, although, as we learned, he would have to pay just the same, for Dartmouth is a compulsory pilotage port. By night the whole haven would be illuminated by the flashing searchlight from some millionaire's steam-yacht, producing a weird effect as the beams mounted the tops of the trees on the high hills which look down to the harbour from either side.



A SNUG CREEK OUT OF THE DART

We remained here till after the King's birthday, and then, feeling that we ought to get on to our goal, made preparations to start. The steamer which is fitted up as a fresh-water supplier came alongside and filled our tanks with his hose. We had eaten more of the Devonshire cream and cakes than perhaps was good for us, and as soon as the weather looked finer we were ready to get under weigh. We saw the *Orelia*, a big schooner-yacht with auxiliary motor engines, clear from the harbour, but she soon came back, and her skipper told me there was a nasty sea off the Start. But at length we set forth, leaving at ten minutes to one in the afternoon with the turn of the tide. By one o'clock we had cleared St. Petrox Castle, where, as usual, the wind was flukey. But the Range always has been a nuisance to sailingmen. One moment you are becalmed, the next minute a nasty gust comes down from the hills and buries your lee-rail. We were more

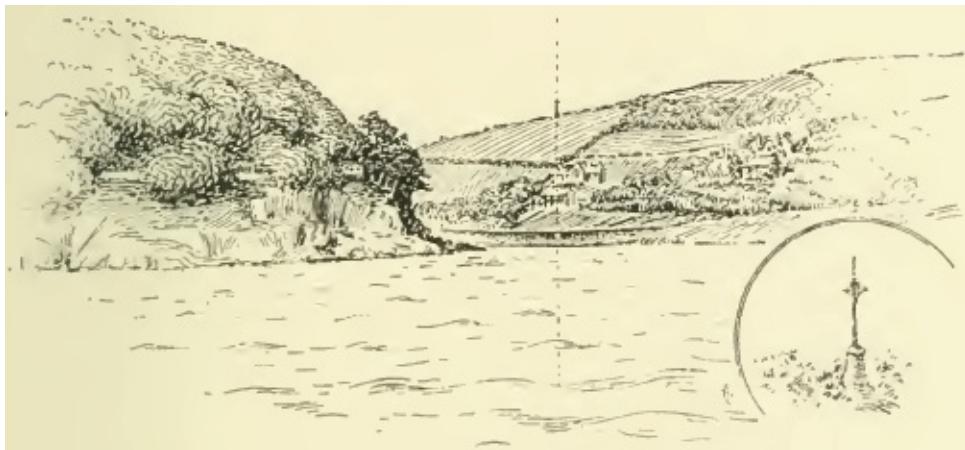
lucky, however, than one of the ships which set forth in the autumn of 1594 bound for Brazil. "Being fully furnished," says the chronicler in Hakluyt, "with all needfull provision, wee departed from Blackwall in October following, keeping our owne coast untill we came into the West countrey, where we met with such gusts and stormes, that the *Salomon*, spending her mast at the Range of Dartmouth, put into harbour." But there must have been something very weak in the *Salomon*'s rigging, for although "by the earnest care and industry of the generall and others having charge she was shortly againe provided" and put to sea, yet it was not long before "the *Salomon* was returned for England: inforced so to doe, by spending her mast the second time,"

As soon as we were outside we found the wind to be about NW. by W., so that as our course was SW, down Start Bay; inside the Skerries we could lay it easily. It was a curious sort of day. The weather seemed uncertain what to do, and occasionally the strength of the puffs from off the land came down on us with some weight in them. We flew along past Slapton Sands, off which we found it advisable to roll in part of the main and stow the foresail, and when the Start Lighthouse bore SW., distant about a quarter of a mile, we steered due S. so as to cut in between the Skerries and the Start Point. We stood right out from the land, having so timed it as to arrive here when the race was slack and the tide just making to the westward. When we had found ourselves well clear of the Start Rocks, nasty jagged pinnacles standing up out of the sea, we opened Prawl Point, but the wind soon headed us, and we could only do a long leg and a short.

The scenery of this coast is rugged and impressive in its lofty grandeur. The pinnacled formation of the land at the extremity of the Start looks most curious silhouetted against the sky, so unreal, in fact, as to seem to have been carved out of cardboard like artificial stage scenery. On the other hand, the general effect conveyed by this Devonshire and Cornish coast is one of extreme awe. Cruel and rockbound, its apparent inhospitable aspect is in wonderful contrast with the characters of the people who live in those delightful little bays and sea-side villages sheltered beneath the hills above. One of the disadvantages of cruising is that one sees so much in an impressionistic kind of way, the imagination is so keenly fired, that one regrets not to have the opportunity and time to linger longer. I have heard yachtsmen bewail the fact that so few chances were offered them of going inland or roaming along the coast. Whenever we were in a snug harbour we used to set out for long walks whenever practicable and scour round the country, but it only whetted our appetite and formed a mental resolve to run down for a few days in the winter or early spring before the yacht was fitted out. But time and resolutions pass on, and somehow these land cruises never seem to come off.

We had thought, when we emerged from Dartmouth, to keep going till we got to Plymouth, but the tide turning against us, and the weather not being too settled, we decided to run into Salcombe. So after tacking into the bay, keeping well over to the western side, we espied an interesting and striking craft brought up outside the bar. She was ketch-rigged, but her sails were a different colour from last year when I had seen and admired this yacht in the Hamble. We soon saw through the glasses that it was the *Maud*, an 18-ton ketch, well known to sailing men on the south coast as one of the healthiest and ablest types of cruisers; or rather, not a type but an individual, for, with her canoe-stern and her significant characteristics, *Maud* is unique. They tell you that she was built for two men who intended originally to sail round the world alone, but that having left the Clyde and arrived at the Isle of Man there was some mutual misunderstanding, and the partnership was dissolved. I know not whether this is the true story: possibly it is not. But I have heard professional seamen often say in remarking her sea-going qualities, that they would easily trust her in any sea. Yet it surprised us to see *Maud* brought up off Salcombe, when we had supposed she was racing against *Jamie* from the Hamble to Queenstown, and had been discussing almost daily her chances in so sporting a match.

I had been into Salcombe once as a boy, but that was on an excursion steamer, so the experience was valueless from a navigating point of view. With the assistance of the chart and the sailing directions, however, we got in with ease and confidence, using the lead and line now and again in the shallowest parts when we were near the bar. We hailed *Maud* when abreast and inquired about the result of the race, but could not gather why it was apparently cancelled. In reply they asked us about the depth of water, and, as mentioned, not having taken a craft in here before, we replied with confidence! But the young flood was making, and keeping a cross-shaped beacon in line over a black-and-white patch painted on a stone wall many feet below, in a N. by E. direction, we soon negotiated all difficulties. As it is easy enough to write this statement, but far more difficult to identify these two marks when entering for the first time, it has been thought well to reproduce them here exactly as they appear from the sea on this bearing; and the cross-shaped beacon, being not easy to locate because not knowing what its appearance is likely to be, has been here also given on a somewhat larger scale in a corner of the sketch. Perhaps these small but essential points usually omitted from charts and pilot books may be of some service to the reader entering here for the first time.



ENTRANCE TO SALCOMBE HARBOUR, SHOWING LEADING MARKS IN LINE

Inset shows the cross-shaped beacon

We sailed quietly past the ruined Salcombe Castle, leaving the red buoy that warns you off the Wolf Rock to starboard, and let go our anchor off the town, with *Mooween* and *Lady Moll* for our neighbours.

All that has been said in praise of the beauties of Salcombe is not one whit too much. Its fine natural harbour, its green hills on either side, its deep, clear water enabling you to see right to the bottom, its bluey-brown rocks and pretty gardens coming down to the water's edge, its sandy bathing coves and little fishing craft, are all separate jewels of different kinds that form the whole crown of beauty which enriches this bit of Devon. Ashore, the old-fashioned streets, and inns, and people, and the well-wooded ravines, the musical accent of the Devonians, have an effect that is always soothing to the nerves of the town-bred being. We were very happy as we swung to our anchor, with the local stone pier in easy dinghy distance for fetching supplies. The food was cheap and good, the air was balmy, and, what is more practical to the sailor-man, the bottom of the harbour was good holding-ground. So we were altogether quite content here, and loth to depart. But two days after we had come the glass began to rise steadily, the sun at last came out in earnest again, and the weather was looking quite summerlike, so some time after *Mooween* and *Lady Moll* had started we decided to cancel a day's dinghy sailing and get farther west while we had a chance. We should perhaps return here again: at any rate we hoped to. So the cable was shortened in, the main was peaked well up, the anchor broken out again, the jib hoisted, and away we went down the harbour.

## CHAPTER IX

### FROM SALCOMBE TO PLYMOUTH SOUND

**W**E had cleared Salcombe Bar by a quarter to three in the afternoon, and with the wind at south-west made short tacks in-shore so as to keep out of the east-going tide. But a big black yawl-yacht, which had come out most of an hour ahead of us, stood right out to sea before going about, and being right out in a foul tide, he made little headway in the light wind. Off this portion of the coast there is usually a biggish swell, and when the wind is strong and against tide it is no pleasant place for small craft. As we had entered we had experienced a little of it, and other small fry that had put out the same day bound west we learned had soon put back. But to-day only the pleasantest little waves were about, and if we could have coaxed out a little more wind we should have indeed been happy. Those north-east winds that ought in any normal summer to have favoured us were singularly absent this cruise. We had not really had a consistently fair wind since the sail from Poole to Weymouth, and now the prospects of making a quick passage were not many.

Bolt Head, guarding the entrance to Salcombe, was a wonderful sight, rising majestically into the blue sky. I had set off the previous day late in the afternoon to walk round, finding the distance much greater and more circuitous than appeared at first. The narrow bridle-path which skirts round the rocks with a sheer drop of several hundreds of feet below gave one no feeling of security, hopping over slippery stones, with a few flocks of sheep grazing behind and a startled rabbit darting out among the heather. Then the sun had gone down a glorious red, and I had been able to trace the outline of the land from this height far away into Cornwall, almost to the Lizard. A nice breeze had sprung up from the west, and a small yacht under the cliffs was hurrying on before it, rolling her boom so much as to be in danger of gybing every moment. It must be a bleak walk for the coastguards along here in the snowy weather. Not a soul was about, and the only sounds were those of the sea hollowing out the rocks below, and the occasional bleating of the sheep. Twilight came, and out of the midst of the sea a flash sparkled, revealing Eddystone Lighthouse in the middle distance.

There was a little hut at the edge of the cliff, evidently for the coastguards, connected up with telephone wires, but there was no one there at present. To find

one's way inland again was not easy, but the night was gloriously warm, and the ten mile walk through Devonshire lanes was well rewarded. Past the Bolt Head Wireless Telegraph Station, only recently opened for transmitting messages to liners going up and down Channel, on through Marlborough to the hills overlooking Salcombe Harbour, the road looked down on to a delicious nocturne whose principal colouring was composed of the little yellow riding-lights against the deep, dark blue of the atmosphere and the water, with the loom of the cliffs and hills enframing it — a real bit of Whistleresque nature. Dinner was very late that night, for the walk had taken longer than one had intended. In the little dark passage leading down to the stone pier a six-foot figure wearing a typical east-coast tanned jumper hove into sight under the yellow gaslight. It was the anxious mate of the *Vivette*, who had feared the worst, but a little sprig of white heather gathered along the cliffs, and a luminous glow-worm captured in the countrylane, were the evidential trophies of the hunt, and, as the mate agreed, the glow-worm would come in handy on a night-passage for lighting the binnacle!

Whilst we were in Dartmouth the spare part of the log had been forwarded on, so that now, being in working order, we put it over the side when off the flagstaff east of Mill Bay. This was at 3.45 P.M., the log registering 40.7 knots. We found this little contrivance very useful before the cruise was over. Smaller than those usually supplied to yachts, it consists simply of a dial which hooks on to one of the projecting arms of the stanchions to support the life-line. The dial resembles that of a cyclometer, but being marked to register knots and fractions of a knot. From this extends your log-line, which trails out well astern of the dinghy, the end being in the shape of a propeller-like fan. The passage of the yacht towing this through the water obviously causes the fan to revolve, and so the line attached to the dial, the connection here being made by means of a small cog-wheel.

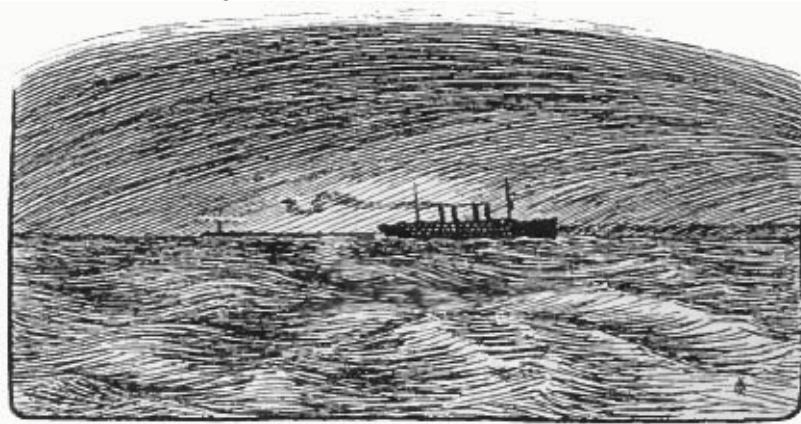


READING THE LOG

Half-an-hour later we saw that we were not doing more than four knots an hour through the water, but we were slipping away from the black yawl, and at least two or three miles ahead of her. At 4.20 the wind freshened very slightly, our course being NW. to avoid the Mewstone to starboard. Ten minutes later the tide had turned in our favour, as we knew from the floats of the crab or lobster pots, and by 4.45 the Bolt Tail Coastguard flagstaff was abeam. And so we went slowly on for another hour, when, just as it had happened in West Bay, the wind went round to NW., so we had to tack. The entry in the log-book here is, "Ship heading SW. by W. Log reads 47.4." It was slow work, for, twenty minutes later, we had only added another knot and a half on the other tack, and the actual distance made good was of course considerably less. Something interesting from a naval point of view, however, was happening in Bigbury Bay as we passed, but what exactly it was we could not discover. All that we saw was this: as steamer, probably from her appearance having some connection with the Admiralty, hove-to as a smaller steamer, looking more like a steam-trawler, came out from the direction of Plymouth to meet her. A boat was lowered and rowed off to the

latter, and presently came back to the Admiralty ship, while the trawler immediately got under weigh again and stood out to sea in roughly a SE. direction, while the other vessel remained as she was. The smaller craft seemed to be making for a spot on the horizon which might have been a battleship, and after a time the Admiralty vessel went off in the same direction also. We concluded that it might have had something to do with the Naval Manoeuvres. The signal which the Government ship had made in the first instance was a black and yellow flag. The incident was so interesting that we were not a little curious to know its meaning.

It is not necessary to weary the reader with the dull, slow progress made during the next few hours, tacking in the lightest of winds, and making precious little headway. As the night came on we stood farther out to sea, so as not to get picked up by any of the islets off Yealm Head. At 10.15 P.M. we took a bearing of the light on the west end of Plymouth Breakwater and of the Eddystone Lighthouse, which fixed our position as being about six and a half knots from the latter, which bore a little to the N.of E. Quarter of an hour later we tacked ship again, and stood in for the shore on a NE. by E. course; but seeing a big liner coming along the land and heading for us, we went about again, and tacked seawards once more. We learned afterwards that this was the big German-American *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, which had just come out of Plymouth bound on her eastward journey. With her big black hull, studded with innumerable white lights from her port-holes, she made a most impressive sight as she went on her course. The time of her passing us was exactly 10.45, and we learned later that she had left Plymouth Sound at 10.22.

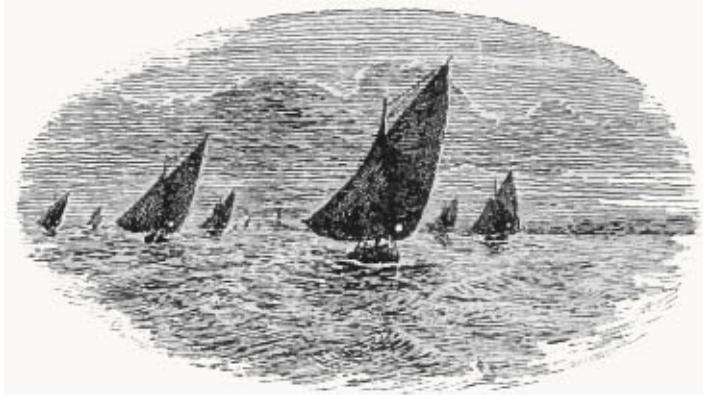


THE "KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE"  
With Plymouth Breakwater Light in the distance

For an hour or more we were hopelessly becalmed, without a vestige of wind, but an uncomfortable swell, which set everything on board rolling, and the boom swinging backwards and forwards across the stars in the most exasperating

manner. A swell would come and away would go the spar, doing its best to break loose, only to be brought up suddenly with a jerk by the sheet. I wonder something didn't carry away. Meanwhile the amount of chafing to the gear, and the slatting of the topping-lift against the sail, went on unceasingly. There was nothing for it except to grin and hope for a breeze. In the meantime, having made sure our lights were burning brightly, the mate went below and had a sleep. Not till half-an-hour after midnight did the longed-for wind make its reappearance, and a nice little draught it was when it really did come. By 2 A.M. we had got on so well as to bring the Eddystone and Plymouth Breakwater lights in line, which meant that we were now getting sufficiently close to the Rame Head to make us anxious. Had there been a light on the latter I should have felt inclined to continue on with this breeze and make a passage to a port down the Cornish coast; but there being no light to clear me off that headland, and the night being very dark over the land, it was impossible to tell how near exactly it was.

We decided therefore to hold on into Plymouth Sound, and having got the two lights already mentioned in line, went about and tacked into the Sound. Finally, after a good "mug-up" of steaming cocoa, espying a nice, cosy-looking bight, the wind being off the shore, we passed through a fleet of Plymouth hookers going out to their fishing grounds, crept into Cawsand Bay in the lightest of winds (now from N. by W.), and at 4.30 A.M. dropped anchor just inside Pier Cove, lowered sails, and turned in.

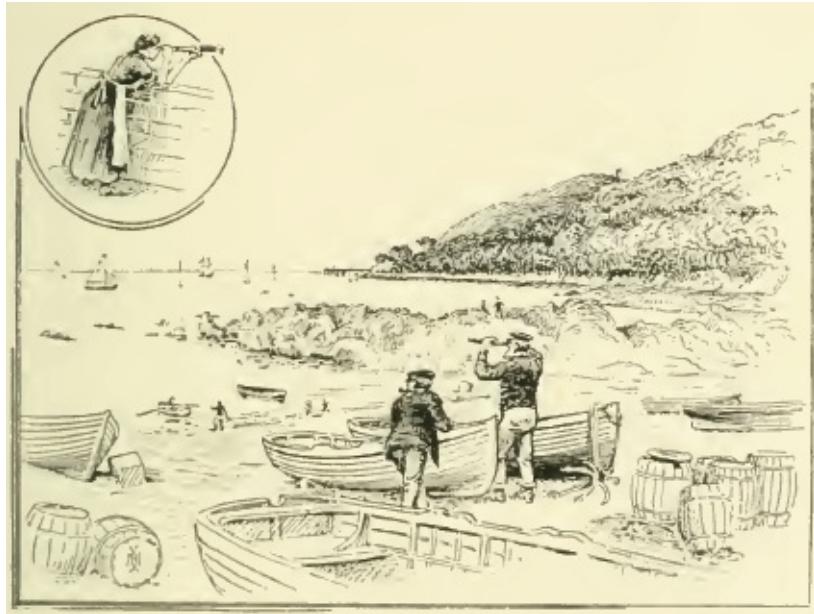


PLYMOUTH HOOKERS PUTTING OUT TO SEA JUST BEFORE DAWN

Another lovely anchorage was this, rich in scenery, quiet with the wind as it was, though no place to lie in if the wind got to the south-east. Cawsand Bay, bathed in the sunlight, brushed clean of the black night, with its rocks and foliage, and the fine breakwater opposite, made up for a dozen calms. The bathing was delicious; the bacon could not taste better as we looked out on to the vast expanse of Plymouth Sound. If Dartmouth was suggestive of the great

Elizabethan explorers and privateers, Plymouth sent our minds eternally on to that one fact, the chasing of the Armada. We could picture Howard, with the new and improved type of ships, sailing close-hauled out of the Sound past our anchorage into the Channel, and getting to windward of the Spaniards the other side of Rame Head; or a few years earlier the setting forth of Drake for his famous Cadiz expedition, when, as we learn from the State Papers of the time, after quite enough disheartening incidents in Plymouth, including the desertion of some of his seamen, that extra-ordinary self-willed female, Elizabeth, exercising the prerogative of her sex, changed her mind, and sent a messenger post-haste to Plymouth to prevent Drake's going. But the fleet had already sailed when the messenger arrived, so a fast-sailing pinnace was quickly got underway, the messenger with his despatch put aboard, and with all speed hastened out of the Sound into the Channel. But bad weather had sprung up in the meantime, and the spring days were still treacherous, so the messenger never reached the man he was sent to find, and Drake was able to go to the south, "singe the Spaniard's beard," and, incidentally, make a very fine blaze in doing so.

Some one had warned us not to be surprised at anything in Plymouth Sound. "If," said our counsellor, "you should find shells whizzing over the top of your mast, destroyers rushing across your bows, and submarines bobbing up under your stern, don't get anxious; it is the Plymouth manner, and you will soon get used to it." True, the shells did go whizzing through the air, but they were well over the other side of the water. Entering Weymouth, however, the men ashore had kept up a fire at a moving target in tow of a tug until we were too near to feel comfortable, but in Cawsand Bay we could see all the fun that was going. Owing to the manoeuvres this was limited, but the inevitable torpedo-boat, which always seems to be going in or coming out of the Sound, came past often enough to keep the view interesting. Then there was an interesting old training brigantine which came sailing round the Sound, with a crowd of youngsters learning all kinds of seamanship, from setting and stowing sails to heaving the lead, and finally, in the evening, the Admiralty ship we had seen the day before came and anchored in Cawsand Bay.



CAWSAND BAY

The village of Cawsand, or Kingsand, as they seemed to name it ashore, was ransacked for more cream and fruit and bread. We made friends with the pilots, and a fine lot of Nature's gentlemen they were. A number of barrels were strewn about the beach that gave to the little place an appearance of belonging to a smuggling community, and if the dead men in the churchyard could tell some tales, they would, no doubt, be able to fill an encyclopaedia with smuggling yarns. The whole village was seafaring, if not in deed, then, at any rate, in mind and instinct. For no one ever seemed to venture beyond his doorstep without a long telescope, not merely the men, but the women folk also. We yarnced with the inhabitants, posted letters to civilisation, heard the prophecies of the skipper of the pilot-cutter moored just astern of us, and turned in early; a beautiful, starry night, as peaceful as it was lovely, for in the morning we were to get going again. It was bound to be a head wind, but we could not dare to grumble when everything else was conspiring to make us happy and contented. So we dined early, worked out our course for the morrow, calculated the tides, set the aneroid, and went to bed.



WORKED OUT THE COURSE . . . AND WENT TO BED

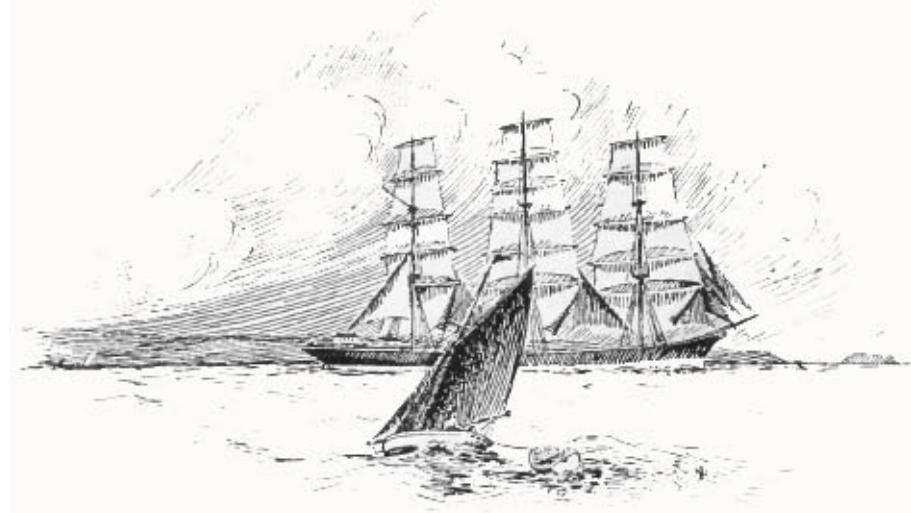
## CHAPTER X

### FROM PLYMOUTH SOUND TO FOWEY

**O**N the last day of June we had catted and fished the anchor, and cleared out of Cawsand Bay by eight o'clock. The morning began with a thick fog, and we suspected that there would be little wind again. A flat calm, varied with occasional will-o'-the-wisps, persisted for nearly an hour, and thus, with the assistance of the sweep, we continued till Penlee Point was abeam at nine o'clock. Then a nice little draught springing up from a little S. of W. we put the ship on a course S. by W., with the flood just making into Plymouth Sound, and a few trawlers lazily waiting for more wind to carry them into port. Off Rame Head we put the log overboard, registering 59.7. We stood out towards the Eddystone on the starboard tack so as to get the advantage of the last of the west-going tide. At 10.10 A.M., when Rame Head bore N. by E., distant three knots, we went about on the other tack, with the ship's head NNW, towards Looe. We had made no leeway on the previous tack standing out from the land in a line with the Eddystone, for the last of the Channel ebb just about counteracted the leeway we should have made. Thus every bit of the distance sailed so far on this tack had been made good.

We met a few trawlers and Plymouth hookers, the latter with their boomless mainsails, running in home with their night's fish. Away seawards were all sorts of interesting craft: a liner or two near the horizon; closer in were a Russian three-masted schooner, a Cornish lugger, a Plymouth barge with her brown sails; whilst scattered about the sea were a few rusty steam tramps and colliers. Another fine, warm, sunny day, but we were to be favoured with more wind this time. We were in Cornish waters now, and bright and beautiful the coast looked as we slipped along through the little waves. By 11.45 we had got right up to the Knight Errant Buoy, when we went about again, the log registering 69, so that in an hour and a half we had done 6.3 knots through the water, with the tide against us most of the way. We kept her on a S. by W. course again for another two or three knots. A nice little summer breeze had freshened, as it frequently does at mid-day, and we seemed to be making much faster progress than in reality; but there was a little bit of a fuss going against wind and tide, that we did not get past the land as rapidly as we had imagined would have been the case.

And so we continued, making the best of the unending contrariness of the wind. As we came on past Looe, with its green island lit up by the sun, and kept on a SSW. course, we saw in the far distance, coming out of a thin haze, a mountain of white canvas advancing rapidly towards us, a picture of ghost-like solemnity. We manoeuvred so as to pass to windward of this vision, and close enough to take her photograph, and as we ran under her stern afterwards read her name, the *CAMBUSKENNETH OF GLASGOW*, a full-rigged ship of about two thousand tons, bound, no doubt, from foreign parts, having called for orders at Falmouth. It was an inspiriting sight, and we were fortunate to have had the goodluck of being so near. With her double topsails, double t'gallants, royals, and lower staysails all drawing, and a trysail on her mizzen, she would not be long running up Channel if the wind held. The big sailing-ships are nowadays becoming something of an exception on the sea, so that when one comes across them, not in harbour, but underway, the occasion is so rare as to make a deep impression on one's mind. Things have altered so much since the introduction of steam, and even the spanker on the mizzen is now more frequently merely a trysail, and the old gaff has been pushed higher up the mast, and retained only as the "monkey gaff" for the convenience of signalling. In the accompanying illustration of the *Cambuskenneth* it will be noticed just above the upper topsail.



THE "CAMBUSKENNETH" OF GLASGOW

Presently, when she had passed, a little lugger came running out of a snug entrance to the land. Neither the mate nor I had ever been hereabouts before, so we hailed the lugger to make sure of our position, and ask the name of this very sheltered, exceedingly picturesque haven cleft in the high cliff.

"That be Polperry, sir," shouted the funny old man as we ran up alongside. The wind was more favourable, he told us, close in along the shore; so we

reached in as near as we deemed advisable, and found, as he had said, that the breeze was coming so directly off the land that we were able to lay a W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. course, which was several points better than what we were able to do farther out in the Channel. We should have liked to have had the chance of exploring Polperro, but we had heard that it was a curious place to get into, and left it as one of those haunts to run down to by land before the yacht is fitted out again — another of those expeditions that but rarely seem to come to fulfilment.

At four in the afternoon we noticed in the bay an auxiliary steam-yacht, in appearance looking more like a converted trawler, stop her engines and lower a boat, from which some of her crew were engaged in clearing something from a foul propeller; so in curiosity we sailed up, and gathered that the owner's fishing-line had got wound up by the screw. As we stood back towards the land again, where the cliffs rise gaunt, cruel, and rock-bound, we heard the moaning of a bell-buoy, which had recently been placed to mark the Udder Rock, though our chart had not contained the addition. For some time we had had in view a square, horizontally-marked tower, standing up above Gribbin Head, and looking very much like a lighthouse, which, indeed, at first we thought it was. But this is the excellent day-mark which has been erected in order to assist the navigator to find the entrance to Fowey, and to distinguish at a distance the Gribbin from St. Anthony or the Dodman. He who cruises down along this coast for the first time will be not a little puzzled to locate Fowey. The line of cliffs seems to run along in one unbroken continuity, so that the harbour you had aimed for and identified on the chart seems to have vanished. But it is this beacon which is of such use to coasters that it, so to speak, heralds the entrance to one of the jolliest and quaintest natural harbours in the British Isles.

At 5.30 P.M. we were abreast of Fowey entrance, but a couple of miles out seaward. Presently we tacked in to the land, took in the log as we got past the Gribbin, and in company of all sorts of little local craft returning from their afternoon's sail, beat into the narrow, rocky entrance with the tide at half ebb, and let go anchor opposite the town in 21 fathoms of water on the Polruan side at six o'clock. In actual distance we had sailed, according to the log, forty-five miles from Rame Head, making an average exactly of five miles an hour.



#### ENTRANCE TO FOWLEY HARBOUR

Showing St. Catherine's Lighthouse on the left (under the arrow) and sketch of the Gribbin Head Daymark in inset

Neither of us had so much as seen Fowey before, but one had heard much of "Troy Town," and indeed its dark rocks, jagged and time-worn, its high undulating hills which protect it from the winds, its delicious, clean emerald-green water, its interesting old-world town and church, its beautiful river and interesting shipping, would have kept us there weeks had we been able. We found that a good mark to have in mind as to where to bring up consisted in continuing up the harbour until a prominent whitewashed house on the starboard hand came in line with the light erected on an iron column twenty feet high abreast of Mr. Quiller Couch's ("Q.'s") house, having a white flagstaff in the garden. If one keeps to the east-ward a bit, so as to be just inside the eastern arm of the harbour, a moderate-draught yacht will find plenty of water for herself even at low water springs, whilst she will be very fairly protected from all sides. This berth is certainly preferable to continuing farther up the harbour, as is sometimes recommended, and there are landing facilities just adjacent on both the Fowey and Polruan side.



FOWEY HARBOUR

From the Polruan side. The Light on an iron column will be noticed across the water to the left of the picture, to the right of the ivy-clad house

We were glad to have arrived in this haven of rest, so peaceful and English, and the greatest kindness and courtesy were shown us, both by the members of the Royal Fowey Yacht Club and the Foweyans generally. To wake up in the morning from a real sleep — the kind that is not granted in towns and cities — to come out on deck with the sun dazzling over this old Cornish town, and the sound of the caulking mallet echoing against the hills over in Polruan Pool as some old topsail schooner is having her decks tightened; to bathe in its clear warm waters, and then eat or smoke or row leisurely about in the dinghy, or climb the hill and look over for miles upon miles along the coast, is to live in Arcadia. One was puzzled for a time why Fowey seemed so familiar to one. It wasn't a case of a previous existence. But the bits of tar and whitewash slabbed on to the houses, ending abruptly with their back-doors on the edge of the harbour; the rickety, weather-worn wooden landing-stages leading up to them; the exact tone of the rocks and water, the sea-gulls sitting lazily on the boats, and the boys who played about either in or on the pellucid water — all seemed so natural, so complete, and just what we had expected to see. And then suddenly it all came back to one that what was in the mind was a kind of concentrated extract of the Cornish school of painters. The colours, and people, and boats, and seabirds had we seen scores of times before, not here but in picture-galleries. All

over Fowey one seemed to see, for instance Napier Hemy written up large in rocks and water; or, to put the proposition more correctly, here were the original details which had gone to compose many a canvas that had depicted Nature with such fidelity and spirit.

Half Polruan too, with its steep, narrow stone streets and its sea-folk, seemed to be decorated this morning with flags and bunting. The schooners and other craft afloat and the quays on land were flapping and fluttering with colours. I rowed across to buy something for the dinghy, and learnt that it was a skipper's wedding to-day. And so if Fowey suggested Napier Hemy, Polruan instantly brought to one's mind Stanhope Forbes' famous picture in the Tate Gallery called "The Health of the Bride," showing with much charm and simplicity the wedding feast of a sailor and his bride in a Cornish fishing village. One could almost see the wedding feast going on, through the artist's eyes, inside one of those old houses by the quay-side.

But we had already spent a day and a half in Fowey; so we rowed across to the whitewashed house at Polruan, round into a dock which, in the palmy days of shipbuilding, used to be kept busier than it is now, and borrowed some cans with which to fill our tanks. One of Nature's gentlemen took me in hand, led me into a dark, little cave in the cliff, and from a well drew forth delightfully cold drinking water. A few journeys and the tank was full, and after watching the arrival of H.M.S. *Lynx*, one of the destroyers stationed at Plymouth, we were on the move again, this time for the final stage on our western voyage.

## CHAPTER XI

### FROM FOWEY TO FALMOUTH AND BACK

WITH a light air from about south, and the atmosphere foggy and overcast, we cleared from Fowey soon after eleven in the morning and set a course SW.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. for the Dodman, and being off the Gribbin Head at a quarter to twelve, put overboard the log, which read 01.9. We soon overhauled another yacht, rather bigger than ourselves, which had come out of harbour half-an-hour earlier, but the wind was such that we could only just lay our course. The first hour's sailing showed that we were doing our five and a half knots and more. Gradually as the day became older the fog and haze disappeared, showing us a most interesting coastline with tempting little bays and villages. Some of these landmarks we found useful as we amused ourselves in taking cross-bearings every now and again.

Before half-past one we had the Gwincas Rock abeam — “Gwinges,” as the local mariners pronounce it — but the wind began to play its tricks again, and of course headed us off as usual. We tacked ship, therefore, and stood off from the rock for about a mile, and then tacked again, being now on a WSW. course, and by 2.30 we had abeam the Dodman — or the “Deadman,” as it used to be known among the old sailing men in the days of the Sea Chanties. A nice little draught was sending *Vivette* through the water, when it gradually grew lighter and lighter, ultimately dying right away. Just previously two small craft bound eastwards with a fair wind came running along, which we spoke. The first chanced to be *Mooween*, and the second *Lady Moll*, on their return journey from Falmouth; with favourable wind and tide they soon vanished from our gaze. But as *Mooween* passed I saw something black showing above the water. *Mooween*'s owner saw it too and tried to hit it with the sweep, but it disappeared. Whether it was one of the sharks or the sun-fish which are found off the Cornish coast in hot weather none of us seemed able to decide.

From three o'clock till after four we spent an uncomfortable time in the flattest of flat calms, rolling about between the headland and the nasty tide-rip, with hard work at the sweep to keep the yacht from either getting too near the shore on the one side, or getting into the unpleasant boil of the broken water on the other. All the time the little vessel was rolling about in the most annoying

fashion, and in spite of our labours in the hot sun we drifted back past the headland towards Fowey. At about the stage when we were quite ready to cry *jam satis* a faint suspicion of an air seemed to come down on our tired sails, and scarcely daring to speak lest it should die away again as rapidly, we trimmed the sails carefully and put her at it. Happily the breeze freshened "some," so we sped on "some," but, as we had expected, the wind was going round with the sun, and before we were across Gerran's Bay we were headed right off our course and making tacks. But we were not unhappy. Here we were at length within sight of Black Head, beyond which was the Lizard, from which it was only across another bay to Land's End. It was a glorious, warm evening, and there is always a joy at seeing new land ahead, and a fresh, unseen harbour to work one's way into. Besides, even if the wind should drop a little it was almost full moon to-night, and the tide, when once we had got into Falmouth Bay, would carry us up where we wished to go.



ARRIVING AT ST. MAWES

But the wind held nicely, and we made our tacks in fine style, and rounding past St. Anthony's Lighthouse, standing watch over the fine entrance to one of the grandest natural harbours in the world, kept on till we had passed the village of St. Mawes, and at dead low water springs ran into a snug little bight at the back of St. Anthony, where a number of other craft — pilots, quay-punts, and yachts — were brought up, and let go about nine o'clock in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms, with St. Mawes over to one side and a most picturesque bit of well-wooded scenery on the other, while in between the tide wended its way backwards and forwards from the Channel. Our actual distance sailed to-day had been but little more than 35 miles according to the log; but we had encountered bad luck in head winds

and calms and a foul tide together.

The morning after broke cloudy and misty, and the glass seemed to be a little uncertain as to what it should foretell. But unless the wind should freshen from the westward we were fairly snug where we lay, though we should have found a more sheltered berth round the bend of the river. So, leaving the mate as anchor watch after rowing me across in the dinghy to the stone pier of St. Mawes, I took steamer to Falmouth and spent a morning ashore getting letters, loafing round the town and shipbuilding yards. The harbour there was full of every kind of craft, trader and pleasure, but amid such a crowd there seemed not too much room if a breeze had come up and anchors had begun to drag; so I was not sorry to have brought up on the St. Mawes side, away from a town and civilisation. By the time I had got aboard *Vivette* again the weather began to look threatening, and there was a certain amount of swell coming up the river from outside. Everything seemed to suggest that it was going to blow before the night, so we got up the anchor, set the staysail, and ran farther up the Porthceul River, bringing up abreast of where a beautiful country lane ended abruptly on to a boat-builder's. Here we were nicely sheltered by high land on either side of us, amid most delightful scenery, with plenty of jolly creeks and arms of the river to explore in the dinghy in case we should be weather-bound for some days. This part of the world is full of surprises to the yachtsman coming from the east. Where he would naturally expect to find the rivers and creeks shallow and muddy he finds that they are deep right up to the rocky banks. A little astern of us was the strange sight of a farm perched at the very water's edge, with a big topsail schooner moored alongside and afloat.

Before nightfall I landed by the boat-builder's and climbed the road that leads up to the hill overlooking Falmouth and St. Anthony, with St. Mawes nestling in the foreground with its pretty cottages, its fishing boats and fishing folk. From the local butcher's I was lucky enough to be able to purchase the last few pounds of meat, and by the time the little grocer's store had contributed its share, my load of provisions was heavy enough for the climb up the hill again. At the top I turned round and looked back. The darkness had come on now, and St. Mawes was speckled with little yellow splashes of light. Some of the smaller craft which had been riding to moorings off the harbour had followed our example and run round farther inland past the point, as the wind against tide was making sufficient motion to cause uneasy riding. Down the lane, perfumed with all sorts of beautiful scents — honeysuckle and I know not what else — the way led me back again to the water's edge, and a hail soon brought the mate up from the fo'c'sle, where the evening's dinner was well under weigh.



IN THE PORTHCEUIL RIVER

In the morning there was time to repeat the walk into St. Mawes, while the mate sketched. At an inn I found the landlord had been skipper in earlier days of a full-rigged ship, so the opportunity of adding to one's knowledge was not wasted. We talked of the *Cambuskenneth*, which he knew well, and told me she was skippered by a St. Mawes man. It is not often nowadays that one has the chance of talking with so interesting a deep-sea captain of a sailing ship, and I hope some day to resume the conversation and to listen to some more opinions on the subject of "monkeygaffs" and the comparative merits of barques and ships. Outside, brought up off the St. Anthony Lighthouse, was a number of full-rigged ships, together with a British cruiser that had been engaged in the manoeuvres — about as fine a contrast between the ships of yesterday and to-day as one could wish to expect. To the man who really loves ships I suppose that, excepting Queenstown, there is no harbour in Europe so interesting as Falmouth. During our stay here we counted most of a dozen full-rigged ships and barques of different nationalities, and of about two or three thousand tons each. To sail round them as they remained brought up in the roads waiting for orders to proceed, while perhaps their cargo of grain was being sold several times over on the Exchange in the city, and to notice their maze of spars and rigging, was a pleasure that, with the advance of steamships, may not be able to be enjoyed many years longer.



SAILING SHIP COMING TO ANCHOR IN THE RIVER FAL

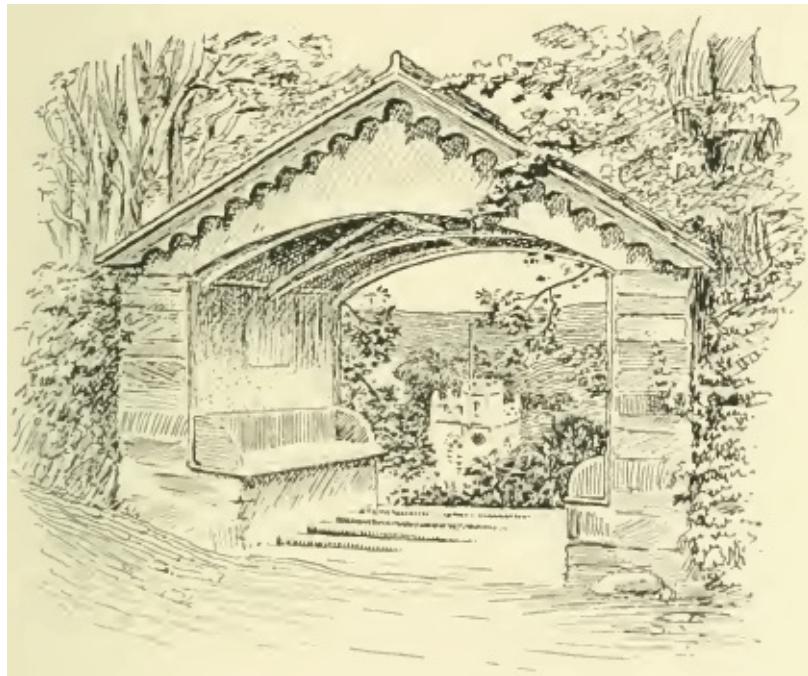
Falmouth Quay-punt by her side

In the afternoon we made an excursion in the dinghy into a creek which almost joins up with the sea; and, leaving the boat tied to a tree, mounted the steep hill and looked over towards the Dodman. It was this natural advantage of a winding creek that was found so useful by the revenue officers many years ago, when they surprised the smugglers and caught them in the very act of their iniquity. The story goes that the smugglers had become so bold in the neighbourhood of Falmouth that they actually ran cargoes ashore in daylight, accomplices being stationed on the overlooking hills in order to signal the approach of the revenue men. On this particular occasion the latter adopted a clever ruse. They allowed themselves to be observed quietly pulling up in their boat along St. Mawes' creek, and the watchers on the hill overlooking the sea presumed that their enemy was going for a pleasant row instead of worrying about the smuggling which at that moment was going on by the coast. So, turning their backs on the creek, they failed to notice the advance of the revenue men, who pulled right up to the head of this delightful creek shown in the accompanying illustration, being careful to keep close under the trees, which naturally hid them from any vigilant eyes on the hill above. The tide happening to be high, the boat was able to float a long way up the narrowing inlet to the point where it bends round and almost, though not quite, touches the sea. At this point, therefore, the boat was pulled out of the water, hauled quietly and stealthily up the grassy slope, and rapidly launched down the hill again the other side where the sea touches the land. Thus utterly unsuspected, the enemy came round the corner of the cove, and the smugglers were captured red-handed.



FALMOUTH SMUGGLERS' CREEK

The time came for us to leave this fair spot, and so on the Sunday afternoon we hoisted main and jib and ran out of the Porthceul River, past St. Mawes and St. Anthony, into Falmouth Bay. There was a good breeze, and we sailed in company with a number of Falmouth quay-punts across the bay to the entrance of Helford River, and then worked back. We should have been glad to have gone into this anchorage. The reports we had received of its tranquil beauty had been enticing, but we also wished to see St. Just, so we tacked back into Falmouth with a topsail schooner, and with little difficulty in finding the buoys ran up to the entrance of another quaint little creek — St. Just — a mile or two up the Fal, where, picking up a vacant mooring-buoy, we settled down for another night. The wind had been strong and squally during the day, but by sunset it had vanished altogether, and from our cabin doors we commanded a vast expanse of shimmering water, bounded on either side by rich scenery, with a few glorious barques in the centre, and the distant forest of masts sheltering in Falmouth harbour beyond. We made friends with a kindly old Cornishman who was guarding the oyster beds, who also brought us fresh water for our tanks. What a paradise Falmouth must be for the all-year-round cruiser; for, said our friend, they rarely had bad winters, and it was years and years since they had had snow. Across the river was Mylor Creek, looking full of temptation to us to linger, while farther up the Fal we could have explored till we came to Truro. We had a council of war in the cabin, the mate and I, and hesitated which of these trips could be undertaken, and whether we could not even run round the Lizard to Penzance and thence to the Scillies. But considerations of time and the possibility of our treacherous summer weather holding us in some harbour for a week or two and preventing our return to the Solent, determined us to begin to “run our easting down” to-morrow whilst we had a chance.



A LYCH-GATE AT ST. JUST

Nevertheless, in the morning we could not leave before we had seen something of St. Just from the land side, and set off to see the old church, which stands in the hollow where the creek ends. It would be difficult to find many spots in England so unpolluted by the hand of man, so sylvan and beautiful as this. At the higher end is a picturesque lych-gate, which gives entrance to a churchyard that is famous all over Cornwall for its flowers and ferns and well-kept beds and paths. You are requested to refrain from picking what is there growing, but on applying at the rectory, provided you do not live either in Devonshire or Cornwall, you are most kindly and thoughtfully presented with a plant or fern to take home as a memento of your visit to this wonderful hamlet. Here, where all ranks of sailor-men, from admirals to fishermen, have been laid to rest in the old churchyard at the end of the creek, looking over to the sea, you will find such peacefulness as will live for long in your memory. The postmistress in the village waxed indignant when we talked with her on the comparative charms of life in St. Just and existence in towns. The former was for honest people: the latter was beneath contempt.

We hurried back, yet reluctantly, through an avenue of trees, past a cottage in whose garden fuchsias and sub-tropical plants were growing, down a path to the beach, and pulled off to the yacht. Up go the sails again, overboard flops the mooring-buoy, and away we go till we get abreast of the German barque, where the wind dies utterly away. But there is surprisingly little tide about Falmouth, and as we lie motion-less alongside one of these grain-carriers come from South

America, we are glad of the opportunity of so intimate acquaintance with her. A Falmouth boatman rows by, whom we ask to express his opinion of the wind that we are likely to be favoured with. "Foxey weather — that's what it is — no good to no one," was the verdict. But just then we got a little puff and ran across to Falmouth, where the yachts were getting underway for the first race of the regatta. We were bound east, but we had letters to call for first, so dropping our hook just off the town, the mate jumped into the dinghy and rowed ashore.

We were soon off again, and by 2.45 P.M. under main and jib had St. Anthony's Lighthouse abeam. As we came out the big yachts were making a fine show, and the famous old *Bloodhound* came foaming along with a crew mostly of keen amateurs. As she came round the mark-buoy she made for us a grand picture of speed and strenuousness, with every man at his post busy but not flustering. Setting a course due east so as to pass well outside the Dodman, whose overfalls would be lumpy to-day, with the wind at due west, and the tide just making in our favour, we began to foot it in splendid style. The breeze had strengthened rapidly while we lay off Falmouth town, and we should not take as long to get to Fowey as the previous journey had taken us a few days earlier. At three o'clock, when about half a mile to the eastward of St. Anthony, we put the log overboard, reading 37.6. By four o'clock we had the Gull Rock abeam, the log reading 43.7, so that we had gone through the water over six knots in the hour, to say nothing of the additional good which the tide was doing us. An hour later we were at the Dodman, and standing on the same course until the Gribbin Daymark at the entrance to Fowey harbour was on our port bow, we gybed and set the staysail as a spinnaker, booming it out with the boat-hook. Each of our three sails was drawing splendidly, and we were making a good little passage. The sea was a bit lumpy, but nothing came aboard; yet had we been punching to windward we should have found all we wanted. The day was getting on, and the picturesque fishing fleet of luggers came out from the land, apparently from Mevagissey, and with that sight before us came back that same consciousness of a previous acquaintanceship that we had experienced at Fowey. Just as the latter had seemed to suggest to one's mind Stanhope Forbes and other artists of the Cornish school, and, while we had sailed up the Fal by the grainships, we had believed we could see again all that Tuke in his pictures had ever intended to show, so here, as these craft dipped to the waves off Mevagissey, was a living reminder of a Napier Hemy.



### ENTRANCE TO FALMOUTH

Showing St. Anthony Lighthouse and the Black Rock

As you enter Fowey you have need to watch out for the Cannis Rock, a nasty ledge which stands up about a quarter of a mile from the Gribbin Head, and is visible at half-ebb. But now as we entered the tide was almost highwater, so we stood well over to the eastern side, ran in between the rocks, lowering staysail as we entered, and brought up in our old berth on the Polruan side, where we found *Mooween* and *Lady Moll* again. We took in the log as we entered, off St. Catherine's Lighthouse at 6.45 P.M., and found it registered exactly 63.6, so that in less than four hours we had done twenty-six knots, or an average of over 6½ knots per hour through the water.

## CHAPTER XII

### FROM FOWEY TO SALCOMBE

THE first time we had entered Fowey we had seen the quays and shipping of Polruan gay with flags and bunting for a wedding. But now, when we returned, the flags everywhere were at half-mast. I rowed over to draw forth some more of the water from the deliciously cool well, and heard of the sad story of a Polruan skipper in command of one of the topsail schooners, who had just died, away from his own port. It appeared that he had been taken ill while on a voyage down Channel, but refused to give in. It chanced, however, that whilst under weigh the forestay carried away, and for that reason alone he was compelled to put into Portsmouth. Whilst there his illness became so serious that one of the crew insisted on fetching a doctor, against which the plucky old man fought to the end. Eventually, however, the crew very properly disobeyed their captain's orders, and rowing off to one of His Majesty's ships in the harbour, fetched the ship's doctor aboard, who promptly decided that the case needed instant treatment ashore; but, as it turned out, the man was too far gone, and death soon robbed the ship of her master. Except for the accident to the forestay the vessel would not have put into Portsmouth, and the Cornishman would have breathed his last on the sea and in the ship that he had known so long.

The fine little breeze that had brought us along so merrily from Falmouth freshened during the night, and *Vivette* rolled a little even in the snug anchorage of Polruan. On the western side of the harbour the waves were dashing against the rocks, and doing their best to hollow out the foundations of the houses above. With wind against tide on these occasions there is ever the annoyance of the dinghy trouble to keep you awake. From the warmth of your blankets you hear the ominous sound of a light, gentle tapping against the yacht's side. An hiatus of quiet follows. Then a big bump ensues, and full of uncharitable remarks regarding dinghies as a class and your own in particular, you leap out of your bunk and go out into the dripping rain as the wind cuts into your flesh through your pyjamas. Then, after being several times nearly thrown overboard by the motion of the yacht, you attach a bucket to the stern of the dinghy, and turn in again. No sooner have you regained a little warmth than the little creature comes alongside with a bigger crash than before. This time you find that, the tide

beginning to slacken, the water-bucket is useless, so the only thing to be done is to haul the bow of the dinghy till it is just over the taffrail. With boats other than those of the pram-design this is not possible, but in many an anchorage, when the circumstances demanded it, we found that by getting the little nuisance's snout just aboard, so that she could not swing out, and must ride fore and aft in the same direction as the yacht, a peaceful night's rest was assured, and something of an added pleasure was given to us by realising that some of our neighbours were less happily situated.

More or less dirty weather kept us in Fowey for two days, but we found plenty to see, and do, and yarn about. *Mildred*, whom we had first met when bound west in West Bay, came in, and brought up alongside of us. We found that had we gone on to Torquay that night instead of Dartmouth, we should have been in port a good hour ahead of them.

We cleared from Fowey at nine in the morning. The weather did not look very promising, but we were a long way from home, and there was no telling whether, even in this first week of July, our treacherous English summer had already gone for the year. The glass was uncertain, the wind was squally, and the sky overcast. We got under weigh with the second jib and about a reef and a half rolled into the main. As soon as we were outside the breeze freshened slightly from the NNW., and setting a course ESE. for the Mewstone, we began to rattle off the knots nicely. By the time we had Polperro abeam we calculated our speed to be about five knots an hour. At 10.40 we got the staysail on to her, and the difference in speed was very noticeable. At mid-day exactly we had Eddystone and Rame Head abeam, so that in three hours we had covered just seventeen knots, or an average of 5 2/3 knots per hour. We had intended to have gone into the Yealm River at the eastern entrance to Plymouth Sound, but with so fair a wind it seemed a pity to lose what little luck we had, and thus we held on as the day was yet so young. There was plenty to interest one all round. Luggers and liners, pilots signalling to the station on Rame Head, a long procession of warships seawards standing up black against the horizon, whilst now and again we met a trader or a large yacht bound the other way, and in and out of Plymouth torpedo craft came running unceasingly like restless black retrievers.

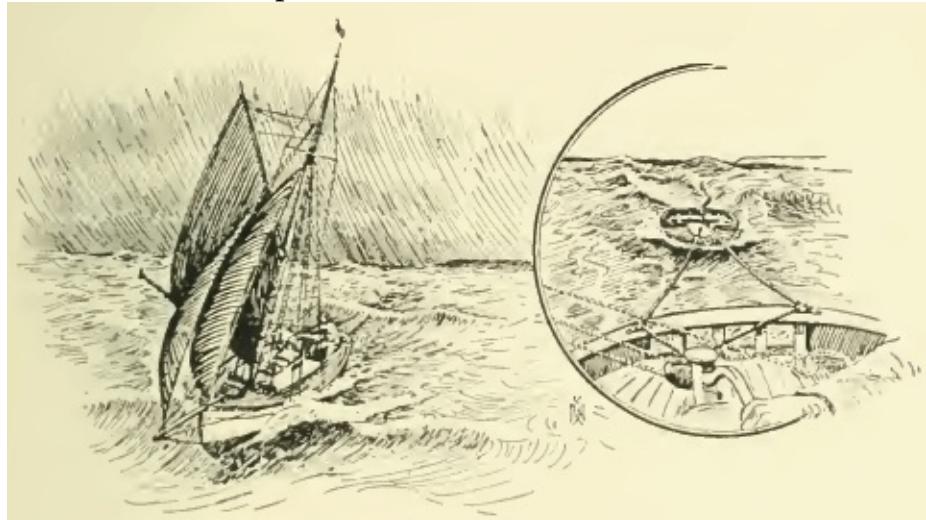
Off Plymouth the breeze freshened and a lumpy sea got up. Had we passed here twelve days later we might have got the wind more southerly, in which case we should have had most of the accidents of time and air that were present in 1588 when the Armada came running up Channel past Rame Head — or Ram's Head, as one sees it called on the early charts. "The very next day," says the old chronicler, "being the 20th of July about high noone, was the Spanish Fleete escribed by the English, which with a South-west wind came sailing along, and

passed by Plimmouth."

As we sped on across Bigbury Bay we soon realised we were carrying all the sail that we needed, and sometimes the puffs would come down so viciously for a few moments, that I had to run the little ship into the wind until the worst of the squall was passed. As the day declined we thought that the breeze might moderate, but instead of that it only increased, and finally we decided to roll in some more of the main, as we could not carry in any comfort all that we had. For a time we ran along with greater ease, but the nearer we approached to Bolt Tail the worse it became. There is something of a swell off the coast between Bolt Tail and Prawle Point at the best of times, and to-day we expected to have our full enjoyment of excitement. We got it.

With the wind now in the direction of about north-west, having backed a little, the water off Bolt Tail was considerably disturbed, and the waves with all this open drift were quite awe-inspiring as they rolled up astern and threatened every moment to come aboard us. What a contrast to the day when we had passed here last, bound west, and we lay becalmed in Bigbury Bay with not even a suspicion of an air to give us steerage way! For an hour and more we spent an anxious time. Once we lowered staysail, but we soon had it up again when the squall passed, as we might as well run on and get it all over. But at last something had to be done, and what we did was so effectual, and, as far as I know, has never been tried before on a small yacht, that the experiment may not be without interest to yachting men. The success is entirely owing to the inventiveness, or rather the adaptability, of the mate. Whilst we were lying in Fowey harbour we had discussed the voyage of the celebrated Captain Slocum, who had sailed single-handed round the world in a small vessel. In his book, the reader will probably remember, Slocum says that when running across the ocean with a nasty big sea following he used to pay out two thick warps astern from either quarter, and the result was that just when the waves looked their worst, and were about to break over his ship, the warps somehow seemed to prevent the worst from ever happening. We decided, therefore, to see if there was anything in the idea for ourselves, so before leaving the Cornish port we selected a ten-fathom warp of about two inches in diameter, and made it fast to the thwarts of the dinghy, stowing it in the boat in such a manner that by the assistance of a boat-hook we could easily throw the end over-board and let it tow astern. Although Slocum had two warps for the ocean, we reckoned that one would be adequate for our purpose. Therefore when off Bolt Tail, and the waves were in all reality threatening enough, we concluded that this would be an ideal opportunity for putting our experiment to a test: so overboard the warp went. If the reader will glance at the accompanying illustration he will see Vivette

running, and in the inset an enlarged picture of the dinghy with the warp trailing astern of the dinghy. The immediate result of this manoeuvre was twofold. Firstly, it caused the yacht to be more buoyant and "corky," so that she ran, if more slowly, yet more sweetly and with an absence of drag: her motion through the water was cleaner and with less resistance. Secondly, when the waves towered up astern, and seemed about to carry out their threats, the warp bisected and cut deep into the former, so as to take away the power they had amassed. For several miles the mate stood with his face towards the following sea, and watched carefully the interesting manner in which wave after wave would advance, only to be cleft in half and die away astern. The principal reason which had actuated us in adopting the experiment was, originally, not so much in order to make the yacht more comfortable in a sea-way, as to prevent the dinghy from charging down on us. But in practice the warp out astern succeeded in doing both, and we were not a little pleased.



RUNNING PAST BOLT TAIL  
Inset shows method of towing warp

Punching to windward and crashing through the spray came a Brixham trawler. As she stood on the port tack close in-shore we should have to give way presently unless she went about. To gybe in that wind and sea was not a proceeding that we looked forward to, and we began to shorten in the sheet in readiness; but at the last moment, happily, the trawler went about on the other tack. She looked magnificent with her tanned sails against the green waves and the white spray splashing about her bows. At length we opened up Bolt Head and the entrance to Salcombe Harbour, and got the staysail down in readiness for a beat up between the high land. Although we had as much as three reefs rolled in the mainsail by this time, yet as soon as we came on a wind we found that we

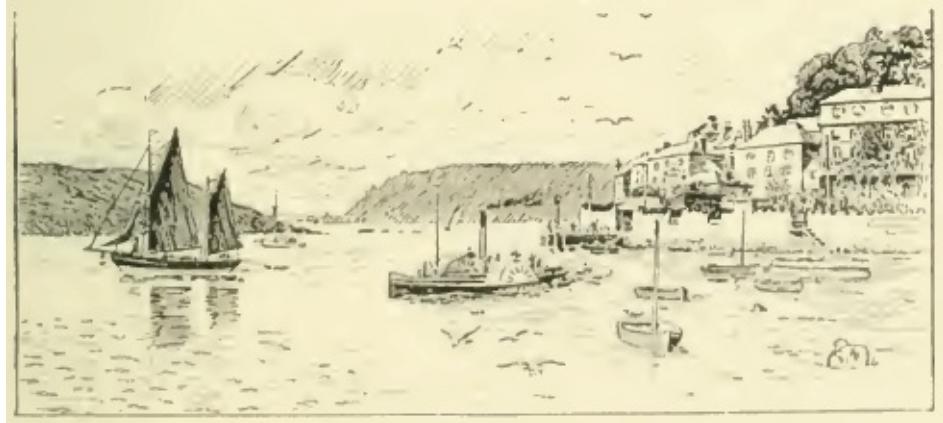
could not have set much more than we already had up. As is usually the case in respect to rivers, especially between high banks, the wind, which outside was nearly parallel to the shore, was now blowing right out of Salcombe, and we had a period of nasty squally tacking, in which the wind would come down from the high hills in weighty puffs and fluke for several points of the compass. Round we would go on the other tack, with the jib sheet thrashing and getting foul of the capstan. A calm would follow, and we made a bit by luffing up, only to have another squall. Once — and this is the only occasion since I have had *Vivette* — she heeled over to a sudden blast until the water came up to the cabin-top, but at last with the young flood just making we got in between the bar and the western shore, and dropped anchor in our old spot abreast of the town. *Stella Maris*, with two of the *Gipsies* aboard from Dartmouth, was brought up astern bound for their summer cruise to the Scillies, and her crew entertained us again with much hospitality and many yarns. They were kind enough to admire the way our little ship had taken the strong squalls as they watched her making her way in. It had been one of the most interesting and sportive sails we had in the whole cruise, and in spite of the loss of speed occasioned by the towing warp, we had kept up an average of over five knots an hour for the whole of the distance from Fowey; for by 3.45 in the afternoon we were well inside Salcombe Bay.



ENTERING SALCOMBE HARBOUR

The next day the wind backed farther to the southward so as to be at nearly south-west, and of about the same velocity as we had found it. *Lady Moll* with *Mooween* and two or three other yachts came running in, having cleared out of Fowey shortly after us the previous day, but having spent the night in the Yealm River instead of making the whole journey in one passage. Our experience off Bolt Tail was repeated in their case, and the accounts we heard from them and others showed that if anything with the wind being farther on shore they had

rather more to contend with than we, though they were able to run into Salcombe without tacking. During the morning, finding that our present anchorage off Salcombe town was somewhat lively, and that there was every prospect of the weather going from bad to worse, we ran round the point farther up the river, and made fast to a buoy in the snuggest of little bays, locally known as "The Bag," with hills on either side of us, and a glorious panorama of scenery on which to gaze. Nothing mattered here. We were near to the shore for getting supplies, and the wind could blow as hard as it willed without inconveniencing us a moment. Presently several other craft, finding the first anchorage not pleasant, ran round also and kept us company.



SALCOMBE HARBOUR

## CHAPTER XIII

### FROM SALCOMBE TO TORQUAY

**W**E were not sorry to be so comfortably protected, for the weather seemed determined to persist in its bad humour. The glass went down lower and lower, and the rain came down in too plentiful a manner to be cheerful; so, realising that to continue our east-ward voyage would not be possible just yet awhile, we gave up playing at summer, and, having hired the moorings we were on for a couple of weeks, arranged with a local boat-builder to take charge of *Vivette* until we should return. It took us some time to collect our gear and to arrange for departure. Halyards and ropes of all kinds had to be slacked off lest the continuous rain should shrink them up till they snapped; loose gear on deck had to be thrust into the cabin. Shore clothes were dragged out unwillingly, and razors began to get busy preparatory to a return to civilisation. With no feelings of happiness we locked the cabin door, got into the dinghy, rowed alongside the funny little paddle-steamer which plies up and down the river, and bundled ourselves and baggage aboard. Salcombe cannot boast of the doubtful privilege of a railway station. The nearest is at Kingsbridge, a few miles up the river, but the trip is so pretty and interesting, that one regretted the steamboat journey was so short. A few hours later and the crew of *Vivette* disembarked at Paddington as the dawn was breaking over the big city.

For the next few weeks the summer entirely forgot to fulfil its customary duties, but at the end of the month we went back to Devonshire, thankful to get away from town life. Almost at once the weather began to improve, the warmth returned to the air, the sun came out, and the world seemed a happy place once more. The mate was delayed in town, so going down alone I made our home ready for habitation, gave the little ship a good "spring-cleaning," overhauled all gear, got stores aboard, and sailed up in the dinghy to Kingsbridge to meet my friend. Loth to say farewell to this earthly paradise, another day was spent in dinghy cruises exploring creeks and tiny bays, sailing across to the Portlemouth side, where, finding a stream of fresh water which came from the hills above right down to the seashore, we filled our water-carriers and sailed back again with our cargo to the yacht.

At length one morning early, at the top of high water, before the mist had left the hills, we hoisted sail and drifted down past Salcombe town out into the bay, ready to resume our eastward wanderings. But the wind was scanty, the atmosphere for a time foggy, and the Channel tide was making to the westward, so progress was denied us. For a time we lay brought up to our kedge; but with the advent of a light air we got under weigh again, and making a long leg and a short at last rounded Prawle Point, where we were passed by a flotilla of about a score of torpedo craft, belching out so much smoke as to darken the sky for a considerable distance. As they came abreast of us, bound apparently for Plymouth, they changed their formation from "single line ahead" to "column of division," so far as one could judge.

Gradually the wind freed, and as the day wore on adopted its usual practice of going round to the west; so, setting the balloon staysail, we made the best of the little there was. By the time we were oft the Start the race was still active. Although the wind was so light, and there was no sea but the gentlest swell in the Channel, yet the water for over two miles away from the shore was disturbed and "floppy." We stood out on an easterly course until Berry Head was well open and we had the Skerries Buoy in line, and were not a little surprised that these overfalls should be so manifest in such fine weather. But under less favourable conditions this is a most unwelcome spot for the sailor-man. A few weeks later a friend informed me that he passed the Start in a small motor-yacht, and found the race so bad that he was bound to go as much as six miles to the southward of it.

About the time we had picked up a fair tide again, and were expecting some more wind, we had a repetition of the old game. The breeze dropped, and the boom began to swing backwards and forwards in the swell. We should not be in Torquay before nightfall at this rate, and we bewailed our continuous bad luck in rarely getting what, under normal conditions, we had a right to expect. Either there was too much or too little wind, even when we hit it off in the right direction. But just when we were getting most annoyed a nice little evening draught came up from the westward, and we had a most delightful sail, passing Dartmouth and the fine lofty cliffs. From the narrow entrance came out a three-masted Irish schooner, looking singularly picturesque with everything up and the dying sun lighting up her canvas and rigging. The air was so still and peaceful that we could hear those on board talking. The skipper had evidently brought his wife and children "to bear him company," and it was a strange sound to hear a child's voice on the sea. Curiously enough I had seen this vessel the previous winter lying alongside one of the London docks, and had been lost in admiration of her, and it was passing strange now to meet her again at sea.

As we ran on, taking advantage of the breeze, we set the stove to work and

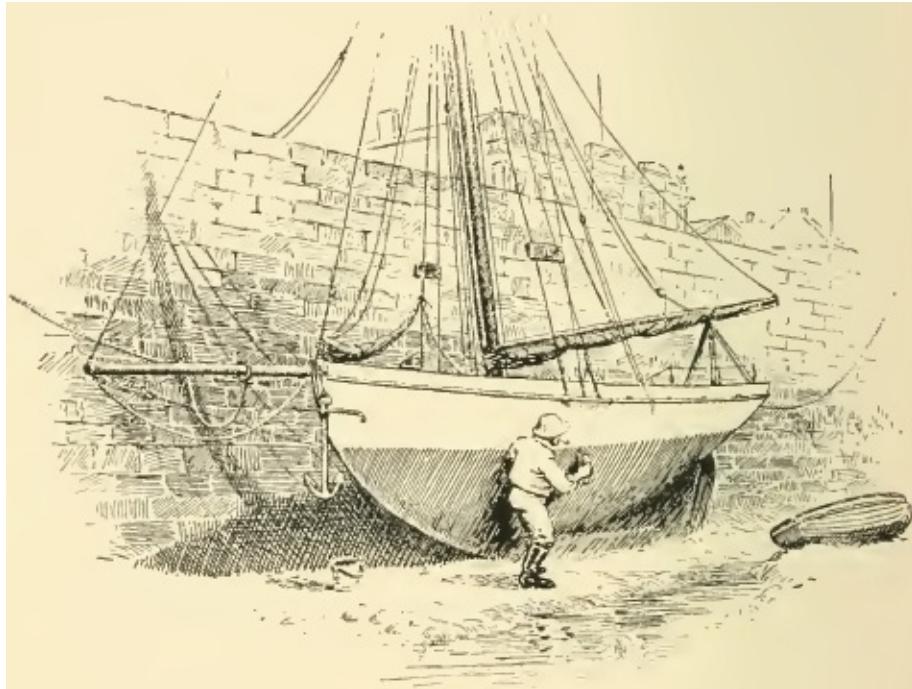
cooked dinner. Past the Mewstone and the rocky islets where the Brixham "mumble-bees" had given us so much excitement, past little bays and mighty hills, we kept on. Excursion steamers were running back to port at the end of the day, trawlers were beginning their fishing, and Berry Head flashed out its light just as we came abreast of its precipitous cliff. The last lap was begun as we rounded into Torbay and set a course N. by W., taking in the balloon staysail and setting the working foresail instead, as we came more on to a wind. But fainter and fainter dropped the latter as we approached Torquay harbour, and the lights of the town grew more dazzling. So many years had elapsed since I had been here, and the new harbour had not been then completed, that I had hoped to have saved our daylight in. This was not to be however, though we found it quite simple by paying attention to the red and green lights at the entrance. There was just sufficient of a draught to waft us in, and as the band played its last tune ashore we let go anchor, and, running out a line from each quarter to a couple of mooring buoys on the eastern side of the harbour away from the new pier, got up the riding-light and turned in.



ENTRANCE TO TORQUAY HARBOUR

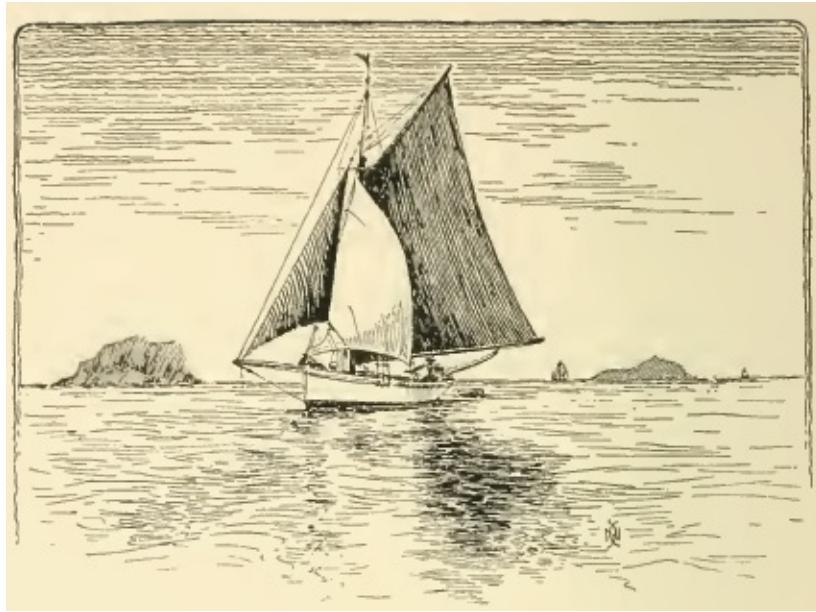
However much Torquay may have altered ashore in the course of time, it has lost none of its charms afloat. To wake up in the morning and realise one was actually here aroused a hundred memories of one's youth. Here one had first learnt to handle a sailing-boat. Round the corner at the bathing cove one had first learnt to swim. In the farther harbour was the old man from whom one had hired boats as a boy, and rowed out to see the whole Channel Fleet assembled, and the *Victoria* and *Camperdown* at anchor in the bay before the terrible historic disaster brought them in collision in the Mediterranean. There was plenty to look at again both in harbour and ashore, dinghy cruises in the harbour and bay, yarns to listen to, and so many things to be done on board, that we could have stopped here for weeks instead of two or three days. *Donah* and her owner came over from Paignton to welcome us, and at mid-night, when a glorious full moon was up in the heavens and the sea was like glass, the motor was set going, moorings were slipped, and away we ran round the bay, with Berry Head's light blinking

to the southward, and a few fishermen hailing us through the night to keep the “compellor” clear of their nets.



SCRUBBING IN TORQUAY HARBOUR

But before we could leave Torquay *Vivette* herself needed attention. Lying during those weeks in Salcombe she had become very foul below the water-line, and her speed through the water in the light winds that had brought us here had been considerably lessened by the growth dragging through. So, in order not to have to linger too long in West Hay, we decided to give the ship a good scrub. At high tide in the morning we towed the yacht with the dinghy to the inner harbour, and making fast alongside the quay, with the peak halyards round a bollard ashore, and a boom with fend-offs to prevent the wall chafing the yacht, set to work as soon as the keel touched the ground, and, as the tide left her, scrubbed with mops and brushes until her sides were quite clean again. In the evening, when the tide returned and floated her, we towed back to our old berth, got aboard fresh water and provisions to make us independent of the shore for the next few days, called for letters for the last time next morning, and we were ready to negotiate the long passage across West Bay.



OFF BABBACOMBE  
Orestone and Thatcher Rocks astern

## CHAPTER XIV

### FROM TORQUAY TO LULWORTH

We cleared from Torquay harbour in the morning, but we might almost as well have remained where we were. The day was fine, gloriously fine, but no good for sailing. Very hot, with the wind in no certain direction, and of such strength as scarcely to give us steerage way, we gradually crawled out of the bay, using the sweep sometimes to assist us. Another series of calms was to worry us, yet still we were heading in the right direction. During the afternoon some of the sailing craft were picked up by steam yachts and given a tow back to Torquay. A couple of trading schooners came out of Teignmouth as we got almost abreast of that town, but they were making little or no headway, like ourselves. So, not wishing to spend another night becalmed at sea — yet making no headway to our port of destination — we decided to run in as near the land as convenient, and, as it was likely to be a quiet night, to anchor until a little breeze might come in the morning. The two islands, Orestone and Thatcher, standing up from the sea, were astern of us, and a big yawl was evidently about to do the same as we, when an offshore breeze springing up at sunset enabled us to run back into Babbacombe Bay. With the fall of night it was no easy matter to

tell exactly how far off we were from the land. There was a fair or some regatta festivity going on ashore, and these lights alone helped one to steer for where one supposed was the spire of St. Marychurch. Below the cliff, on a level with the sea, were a few weak lights, which might have been from a cottage close to the beach, but afterwards, in the morning, we found them to be the riding-lights of craft brought up much closer in.



TORQUAY HARBOUR

Not wishing to stand too near in to the bay, lest the wind might shift, and we had to beat out hurriedly, we let go when the Teignmouth lights were in line with Berry Head, and, as we had expected, found we had five fathoms. Notwithstanding that the wind was a little E. of N., and so coming from the Teignmouth shore, we rolled nevertheless in a very lively manner, though, having taken the precaution of riding to the kedge with a good springy rope instead of the cable, we might have been far worse off. All during the night we had a nice breeze, and there were times when we regretted having halted, but the morning would soon be here, when we should be off again. Uncertain as to what the wind might do before dawn, we took it in turn to keep anchor watch. A trawler was hovering about in our vicinity, and we had no desire for him to repeat the experiment one of his brotherhood had made on the yacht which had been sunk the other day outside Torquay pier in spite of a brilliant riding-light showing. The mate took the first watch, and I turned in for a couple of hours till 1 A.M. After that I kept watch alone till about four. From four till six, as the light returned, we both endeavoured to woo sleep, though very tired with watching, and exhausted by the heat of the previous day.

The wind had got up so much that the motion of the ship was exceedingly lively, and the creaking of spars, the rattling of kettles and pans, the slapping of the water against the yacht's sides, the slatting of ropes and halyards, and a medley of other irritating noises made sleep and rest sotterly out of the

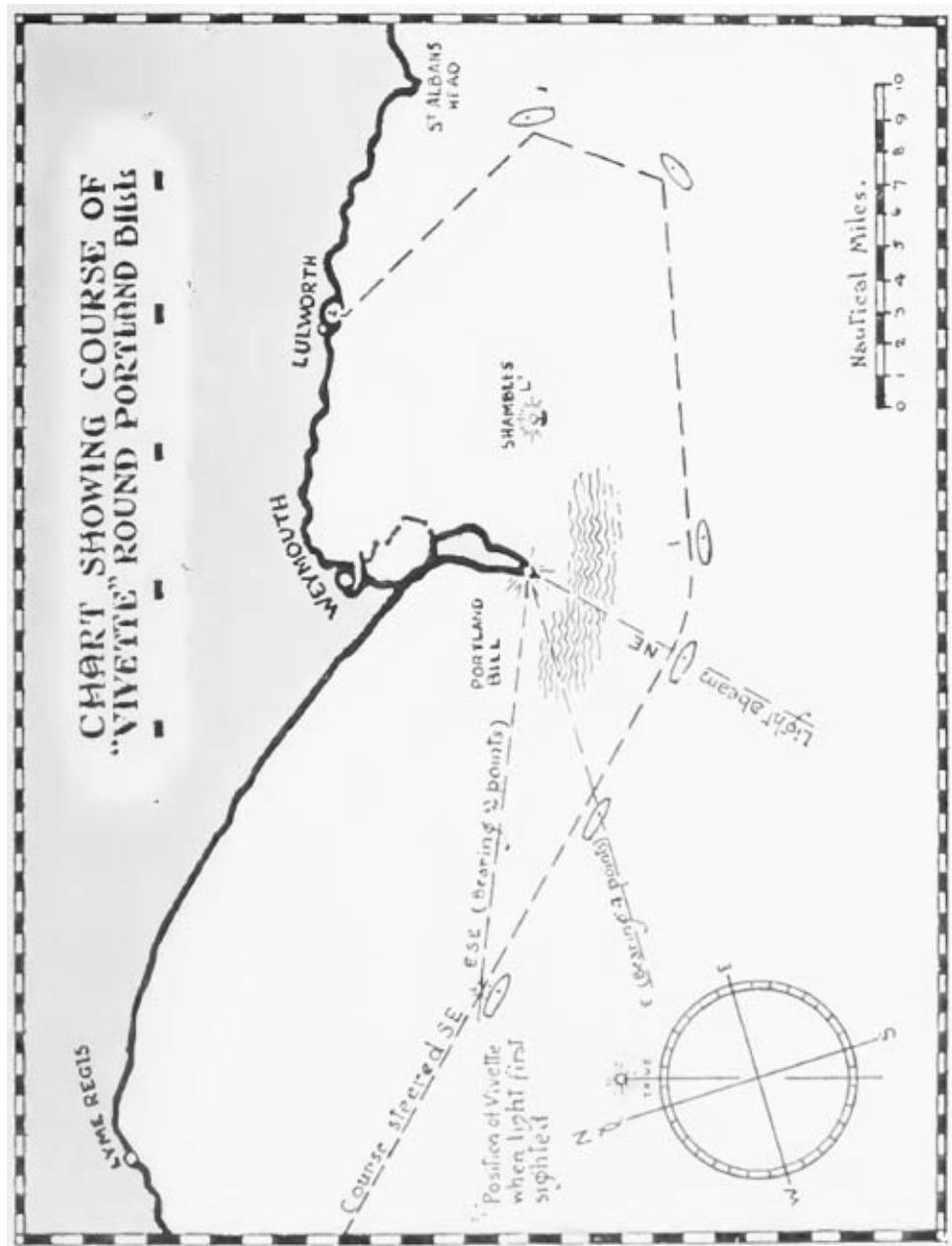
question, that we tumbled out and gave it up. Instead, we cooked breakfast, and by holding on to our mugs — the drinking vessels, I mean — we were just able to prevent the contents from being distributed all over the cabin. By the time we had come on deck she was dipping her bowsprit into the sea in a merry fashion, and to stand upright, without being lurched overboard at every roll, long enough to allow us to hoist up sails and get in the anchor, was a very difficult undertaking. Before seven o'clock we were off again, somewhat sleepy-eyed, but gladdened by the realisation that we had a breeze at last. We had intentions of running on to Lyme Regis, but the wind was now NE. by N., and had we arrived off there we should have had drawbacks to contend with; for if we had stopped a night inside the harbour there we should have had little rest, since the tide leaves the place dry, and there would have been the nuisance of having to keep shifting warps. If, again, we had dropped our anchor outside, there was no telling what the wind might suddenly do, nor whence it might come from, and as I had only had about an hour and a half of "shut-eye" the previous night, and the mate but little more, we resolved to push straight on and get to the other side of Portland Bill whilst we had a chance.

Coming west, the reader will recollect, we had passed round the Bill close to the land and inside the race. But now bound eastward, and not knowing whether we should be able, after crossing over forty miles of bay, to hit off our tide exactly, it seemed more reasonable to go outside and well away from the land, lest in the case of a calm we should be carried by the powerful tides into the terrible race and dealt with as it pleased. There are plenty of incidents within one's knowledge to show what Portland Race can do. One man I know has seen big topsail schooners turned round and round and rendered helpless when the race got hold of them. The year before we passed a yachtsman had lost his life in the race, and I know of a sailing vessel which entered the race and never came out of it. Even 5000-ton steamers find a decided effect is made on their steering.

The course that I had worked out for *Vivette* was to pass the Bill five or six miles to the southward. By the book of tidal streams I knew all the time the direction in which I was being carried off my course, and allowed for it accordingly. Standing out from Babbacombe Bay until we had the Orestone in line with our stern we got on to our course, and by 8.45 A.M. were off Teignmouth, where the log was put overboard. For the next twenty hours we never saw the land again, and the heavy haze which was over the Devonshire coast did not lift until we were too far away to see any land. But the wind held excellently for a time, and the balloon staysail again did wonderful service: one could positively *feel* the knots rapidly reeling off. Till after mid-day we had ideal sailing conditions — a fine and favourable wind, blue sea with a nice little

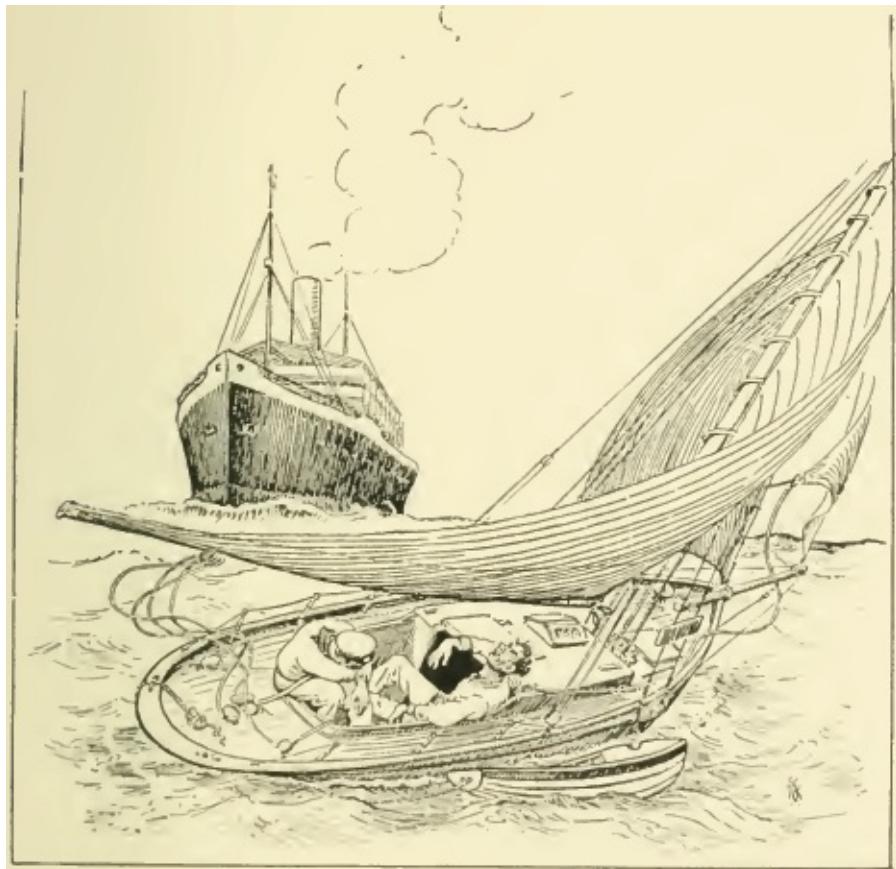
motion to make it interesting, and a sky of fainter blue above us with powerful, brilliant sunlight. At three in the afternoon the wind moderated, and the little wisps of white vanished from the sea, yet we were still doing well. At four, however, we were doing very little — we had barely steerage way — and then for two or three hours we lay doing nothing at all, with the log hanging almost perpendicular down in the placid sea. The mate took the helm, and for an hour or less I had a nap. Soon after we cooked dinner and got everything ready for the night. The lamps were trimmed, the direction of the tide for the next few hours verified, and the distance made-good reckoned up. From the calculations thus made we fixed our position as being about 10 or 12 knots from Portland Bill, expecting the latter to bear about E. by N. Occasionally a little faint air would come from somewhere, and we could keep on our course; but it was nothing to congratulate ourselves about, and after having come thus far so well, we were not a little disappointed to be bereft still again of any wind. Soon after seven we spoke two large sailing yachts, the first of which was flying the burgee of the R.Y.S. We asked them as to the course, and they replied that they estimated Portland Bill to bear about E., distant 10 knots, so we were not far out of our reckoning. Then all three of us were becalmed again. Over to the southward a fog was coming on and shutting out a sailing craft which looked like a trawler. We could hear the thrash and thump of a big ship's propeller getting rather too close to be pleasant, and the prospect of spending the night in the vicinity of the Bill, in the track of liners and all manner of craft rushing by in a fog, was not a pleasing thought to dwell on. A little more wind came up soon after we had hungout the side-lights, but it was never in the same direction long. For a time we stood out to sea, and finally, when at last the breeze returned to its old quarter about NE., and seemed inclined to stay for some time, I altered my course altogether and determined to run back into the middle of West Bay on a NW. course for four hours, from eight till midnight, and then to run back again on the opposite direction SE., so that by 4 A.M., when there would be enough daylight to see, we might be at least in as good a position as we were now, and, possibly better, if the wind freshened. I am convinced that, considering the lack of wind, the presence of fog, and the vicinity of the race and traffic, this was the wisest proceeding. In the hollow of West Bay there is rarely any traffic except a few traders, trawlers, yachts, or, by day, excursion steamers. We knew our position and the direction in which the Bill bore, though we could not see it; so that by making allowance for the set of the tide as well as for leeway we could not get very far wrong by going a definite number of hours one way and then running back the same length of time in exactly the opposite direction. At midnight, then, with a good breeze, which held throughout the night, we hove-to

for a little and then came about and began running back along the line we had come. Gradually the warm smell of something like new-mown hay told us we were approaching the land. We picked up the four flashes of Portland Bill Lighthouse on the port bow, showing up on about the same bearing where we had expected to pick them up. It is so easy to get wrong in one's calculations at this game; and working out compass courses, allowing for leeway and tidal insets and changing wind, in a small cabin without falling into error is sometimes a little difficult, as those who have tried know well. We were therefore not a little pleased to find that after sailing for twenty hours with no land to fix our position by we were none the less where we expected to be. With the light now to steer by we were able to keep on until we reckoned the latter was distant about five or six knots. This we did by using the method known as the two-point bearing. By observing when the Portland four flashes bore two points on the port bow, i.e. ESE., and then when they bore four points, i.e. E., noticing by our log the distance run in the interval, we were able to calculate the distance we were from the Bill. The principle is of course that of the instance where, the two angles of a triangle being equal to one another, then the sides which are opposite to the equal angles are also equal to one another (Euclid I. 6). When we had kept on our SE. course until the Bill bore NE. and we found that we were the five miles off, all that we had to do in order to round the Bill at the required distance and be well clear of the race was to keep the four flashes abeam until just the other side of the Bill. This we did, and by daylight were the other side of the lighthouse. At last we had got round, and expected soon to pick up the Shambles Lightship and then alter our course for Weymouth. The gorgeous feed we were going to have when we got inside the harbour, the lovely hours of "shut-eye" we were to enjoy, with no worry about anything, and a clear run home when a westerly wind should spring up gladdened our sleepy, hungry bodies by anticipation. Vivette had never sailed better than during the last few hours. There was just enough sea on to amuse her, and the way she took the waves was an exhilarating pleasure.



But no sooner had we opened Grove Point on the east side of Portland than the tide turned against us (as of course we had expected), but to make matters worse the wind shifted farther ahead, so as to send me more than a point off my course. As if that was not enough, when the sun got up the wind began to decrease in force. For several hours the tide was so strong and the wind so weak, that, although we were running through the water at a nice pace, we could see by the land that we were slowly going astern, or, at the best, holding our own and nothing more. At ten o'clock the wind vanished altogether, and until about four in the afternoon we spent the most unpleasant part of the whole of the cruise in a nasty bucking swell and a broiling sun. There was not so much as a faint air, and

the yacht drifted anywhere, sometimes stern first, sometimes broadside on. The dinghy of course had to have her little say on the subject, and persistently bumped up alongside. For a long time we used up part of our remaining energy in fending her off, but finally, being so weak and tired with loss of sleep and food, we lashed the helm amidships, and let both yacht and dinghy do what they pleased. The mate went below and turned in, but the cabin was like an oven. To complete matters, the large can in the fo'c'sle containing the ship's paraffin at last got adrift with the continual motion, and emptied at least half a gallon of its contents into the bilge, whence a pretty odour came into the cabin to intensify the unbearable atmosphere. Twice, before the calm had quite set in, we had each fallen asleep at the helm with the tiller underneath our arm. If only we could have just a wisp of a wind, we thought it would be bearable. We tried every means we could conceive for refreshing our fatigue. We tried eating, but the food would not go down somehow. We tried to drink some water from the tanks, but that was nearly as warm as the atmosphere; so we washed in it, but we were soon as hot again. All the time the boom was thrashing madly from one side to another, and the counter of the yacht would come down with a slam and a bang on to the swell. Fortunately the tide had turned again and was carrying us now to the eastward instead of down Channel. Lucky it was too that we had come well to seaward of the Bill, or we should long since have been in the middle of the race. What we were encountering now was the disturbed water caused by the latter, even though some miles off. Two big trading schooners appeared to the eastward, but when they found the wind was dying down altered their course and stood right out so as to give the race an offing much greater than even we had. Where we lay we were in the very track of the Channel traffic, and the day was getting on. Allround, the arc of the sky was cloudless, and not a vestige of wind seemed likely to pipe up from any quarter. We had had two nights out, practically without any sleep, and there seemed every prospect of a third. The tide would soon change again, and we should drift up and down the Channel, possibly on to the fringe of the race, and no doubt the usual evening fog would come on again. When we were not endeavouring to picture these beautiful possibilities we were lying prone on the deck hanging on to something to avoid being rolled overboard, or dozing in the well, myself over the tiller, the mate with his long stature propped up against the bulkhead. The thrashing of a steamer's propeller, however, at last awoke us to our senses, and a big liner with white gunwales passed us quite close. We must have looked singularly foolish from her lofty decks.

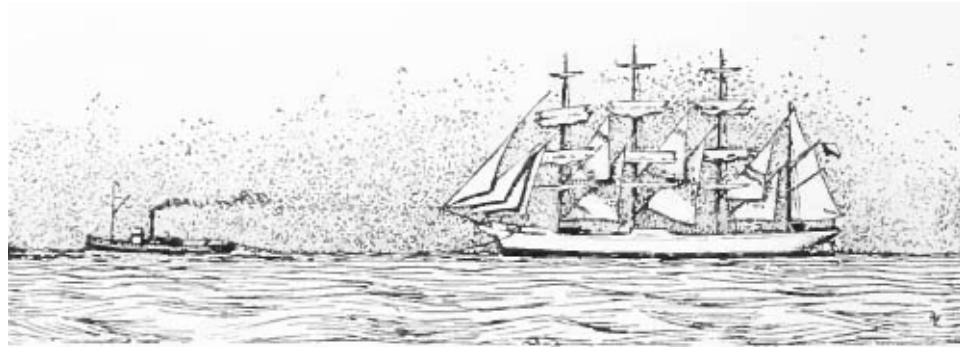


BECALMED OFF PORTLAND BILL

The tide had carried us well up Channel by now, but just as it was about to turn a weak, frail breeze came out from the westward — nothing to get excited over, but better than no wind at all. This gave us barely steerage way. Half-an-hour later and it increased slightly, so that we were doing perhaps two knots through the water. The sun lit up a headland, which I instantly recognised as St. Alban's, so, fearing the breeze might soon die away again, we decided to stand in-shore and get hold of the land before nightfall. The glad news of a little more wind brought the mate out from his couch, and we soon had the balloon staysail on her again. The wind seemed inclined to stay with us, and as we approached St. Alban's and the magnificent coast which stretches right along from Weymouth eastward I was minded to keep on and make a passage through to Poole, but the mate favoured going in to Lulworth Cove for the night to catch up on sleep. Poole seemed to convey nothing to a tired mind: Lulworth by its very name suggested rest and peacefulness. So we altered our course and steered for this.

At six in the evening we had some Bovril, which did us some good, as it was our first food for about twenty-four hours, with the exception of some cocoa

which we had during the previous night, and some bread and jam which we had tried to eat off the Hill. But a fine sight was coming towards us in the shape of a four-masted barque, with headsails and staysails and jigger set, in tow of a powerful tug. With her tall spars and white hull she presented a fine sight, and we felt better for having so pleasant a surprise. As we came under her stern we were able to read her name — *L'Avenir*, of Antwerp. *L'Avenir* — “the future” — that was what we had been wondering about for the last few hours. It was amusing to see this in big letters now before our eyes. But our worries were ending, for the tide had turned again and was carrying us on towards Lulworth, and the evening breeze would possibly be gracious enough to hold until we had got in.



“*L'AVENIR*,” FOUR-MASTED BARQUE, IN TOW OFF ST. ALBAN'S HEAD

If that morning’s experience had been something very trying, the close of the day was one of the most charming bits of the whole voyage. The wind just got us in to this horse-shoe cove, where high cliffs cause it to look even smaller than it really is. A number of summer visitors were rowing about the entrance, and the local fishermen were pulling their boats up the pebbly beach as *Vivette* came in through the narrow, rocky entrance and let go a little distance inside. Before we had got sails stowed the coastguard had descended from his lofty look-out and come off to us, and in good old clumsy naval fashion bumped into our side as if he were coming alongside a battleship. In return for scraping off some of our white paint he was handed a few candid remarks which we had been accumulating during the last few hours; after which he thrust a book into one’s hand to fill up details as to the “name of vessel,” “master,” “owner,” “number of crew,” “cargo,” “where from” — and more besides.



LULWORTH COVE

Later in the evening we dined in such peace and comfort as we had not enjoyed for many along hour. The air was beautifully warm and balmy. Out away to the south-west Portland Bill was busy with its four flashes again, reminiscent of the previous night. What a contrast to be here in this haven of rest and beauty after being tied up in a small bit of a ship for three days and two nights, with less than three hours' sleep a piece during the whole time! After dinner I got into the dinghy and rowed ashore. I shall never forget the delicious stroll up the road which runs along the valley through the hills, past a few houses and pretty cottages. The night was dark but clear, and I remember passing a number of children sitting out in a garden where a luminous pattern had been made in the grass by glow-worms. They were particularly nice children, with musical voices, and singing a patriotic song that was new to one. They were the first sounds of civilisation we had heard since leaving Torquay. We wanted fruit, and the village store was closed, but the walk had been a great treat, and I rowed back to our home humming some very optimistic tune, as if we were beginning our cruise rather than approaching its end. The riding-light was burning brightly, and the mate was smoking in the well. Like a good friend he had thoughtfully made my bed, and never was royal couch more soft and alluring than were ours to-night. By ten of the clock we were tucked up and asleep, and for ten solid hours they might have fired bombs under the cabin table and we should not have been aroused. Yes, Lulworth was a fine place.

## CHAPTER XV

### FROM LULWORTH TO SWANAGE, AND HAMBLE

**B**ARELY had we sailed out of Lulworth Cove in the morning than the usual calm was waiting for us. Ordinarily we should have felt annoyance, but we were getting used to our bad luck now; besides which we were in soundings all the time now, and could easily let go our anchor instead of drifting. The Dorsetshire coast-line is so singularly impressive and grand, that we would have hesitated to grumble even if all the conditions were not to our liking. At any rate we were just making headway, and the tide was with us. For companions we had several torpedo-gunboats from Portland, which, moving very slowly, and occasionally bringing up, interested us vastly. A number of small buoys had been dotted up and down the bay between Lulworth and St. Alban's, and we watched His Majesty's ships engaged in the latest Naval fad of sweeping for mines, a lesson which the Russo-Japanese War has instilled into the Admiralty. Two gunboats seemed to tow abreast of each other about a cable's distance apart, each ship having an erection at the stern resembling a thick spar set at an angle of about forty-five degrees, apparently used as a sort of cathead for the sweeping gear. Other manoeuvres followed, including firing at moving targets. There was only another yacht in sight, so we had a sort of private naval review of our own.

By occasional puffs of wind aided by the sweep we at last reached St. Alban's Head, keeping as before close in to the shore and inside the race, which, like a gigantic ostrich feather, stretched right away for some distance to the south-east. Although the sea was otherwise perfectly smooth, it seemed to make no difference to the existence of the overfalls. As soon as we began to round the headland a nice little westerly breeze sprang up, so boomerang the balloon foresail out like a spinnaker, we left the other yacht astern, and went along gaily past the exquisitely coloured coast, the brown Tilly Whim caves with Anvil Lighthouse perched above, and rounded Durlstone Head. We had just been able to get ahead of Peveril Point, and to open Swanage Bay, looking snug and pretty with its green fields and red-tiled roofs, when the tide turned against us strongly; so relinquishing our original plan of making for Poole, we ran into the bay, and picking out the best berth we could find abreast of the pier and out of the way of

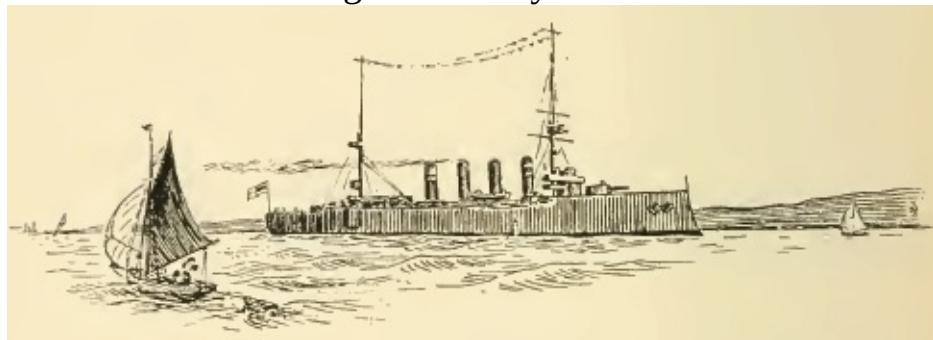
the passenger steamer traffic, anchored once more. Swanage, in spite of its alluring natural beauty, leaves much to be desired from the yachtsman's point of view. Like other forms of beauty, it is treacherous when it likes. The holding ground, as the sailing directions rightly point out, is indeed indifferent. As soon as the wind gets easterly it is time to clear out, and we noticed that every one of the yachts at anchor here kept her jib lashed to the bowsprit, with the mainsail all ready for getting under weigh in the shortest possible time. We did the same.

But the glass was high, and the evening was as calm and peaceful as ever. The mate rowed ashore after dinner, replenished his camera, and purchased such stores as Lulworth had not been able to supply us with. In the morning, as soon as decks were washed down and the breakfast cleared away, we pealed the main well up, and after wasting some time off the white cliffs of Bollard Point taking photographs from the dinghy, at half-past nine set our faces in the direction of Christchurch Head. It was a case of advancing by faith rather than by sight, for another fog had come up, shutting out everything to seaward, and totally obliterating the Hampshire shore. Steering E. by N., and making allowance for the tide which was still coming out of Poole harbour, but would soon change in our favour, and allowing from half to a point for leeway, we began to travel with the wind from about north-west. Our useful and hard-working friend the balloon staysail, which in the light weather had helped us so much during the cruise, was again hoisted, but alas! for the last time, for we were now nearing the end. Gradually the wind backed to the westward and the fog lifted, to the relief, no doubt, of the tug which had come out of Poole "seeking." Instead of the thick haze we had a rich sunshine again, but still the wind was holding nicely: we could not have wished for fairer conditions. For a time we had hesitated whether to enter the Solent by the North Passage between Hurst and Shingles, as we had come the previous year, or whether to go outside and come up through the Needles Channel for a change. In the fog it would not have been easy to pick up the Christchurch Head Buoy, but since the atmosphere had cleared we made for the latter, and stood straight on for the prominent white farm, bearing about E. by N. from the buoy. This is a most useful object when wishing to cross Christchurch Bay and making for the North Passage, and is the mark used by the Bournemouth steamers making for inside the Wight. Then as soon as the red building of Cliff End Fort on the Isle of Wight shore bears SE. by E., all that one has to do is to alter one's course to this, and go straight on. By this means the various traps in the North Passage are avoided, and there is no need for anxiety; but, of course, it would be futile to turn to windward through here with a foul tide.

As we passed Hurst a barge was actually on the Shingles loading pebbles and

sand, a big White Star liner was coming out dead slow, followed by a four funnelled German-American liner. No sooner had the former arrived off Totland Bay than the fog which had left us earlier in the day returned. For a long time we heard a merry quartet continuing from the foghorns of the two liners outward bound, another big steamer coming in, and the Needles Lighthouse making its shrill sound in contrast to the others as a soprano is to a trio of basses. Curiously, though the Needles were shut out from sight no suspicion of a fog came any nearer to us than about Totland, but for a few moments the wind dropped so much that, with the strong tide off Hurst Point, the power of wind and stream was about equal. Thus, although we were passing the shore at a good speed, the rudder was rendered for a short time inoperative. It is curious, too, what a little bit of a popple is caused off the point where the strong tide rushing up out of the North Passage collides at right angles with the equally powerful stream flooding from the direction of the Needles so as to create a kind of miniature race, which in the event of wind being against tide might cause inconvenience to small craft.

Setting our course E. by N. for the Solent Banks Buoy, we were not long in leaving Yarmouth astern. Never had we seen the coast-line on either side looking so beautiful as to-day. The grandeur of the Dorset cliffs and the cruel majesty of the rocks of Devon had given way to the richly-wooded grass slopes of Hampshire. There was the usual assortment of Solent traffic everywhere to keep us ever interested — more liners, yachts of all kinds, barges, schooners, warships, and I forget what else. Off Beaulieu one of the "County" Class armoured cruisers, H.M.S. *Hampshire*, passed us bound the other way. Dotted here and there with officers and men at their posts, stuck all over with wireless gear, fire-control stations, and no end of other gadgets, she was every bit as impressive-looking as business-like. Had she come a little earlier, when the other three big steamers were passing Hurst and the fog came up, we should have seen an interesting bit of seamanship no doubt with four monsters in none too wide a channel, and each of them drawing about thirty feet of water.



H.M.S. "HAMPSHIRE"

As we came up past the Brambles, and saw again the old, familiar navigation buoys, so well known to all who cruise along here in the summertime, we saw the *Shamrock* and *White Heather* and the others of our crack racing fleets, showing up a fine picture over towards Spithead. Cutting across Calshot Spit, just inside the light-float, past the Castle over to the eastern shore, past the Baldhead Buoy to the entrance of the little opening which leads into the river Hamble, we sailed merrily on. The tide was just coming up as we passed Warsash, pretty as ever, with its water-way just as narrow and congested with craft as the day we had left it. Then, farther up beyond the houseboat ; , her white hull showing up prominently against the green background of Hamble's trees, we rounded-to, and coming to anchor astern of the training-ship *Mercury*, brought our little voyage to its conclusion.



AT ANCHOR IN THE HAMBLE

Before we hauled down our burgee at the end of the cruise we had time to reckon up a few of the lessons that we had learned during the last two summers and our pleasant voyage of over a thousand miles. If we had done nothing wonderful, at least we had an opportunity of forming conclusions which were as interesting as any to be arrived at on shore. The sport of yachting is yet so young that it is barely out of its infancy, and whatever improvements may be forthcoming as to external design and internal economy must result for the most part from actual experience of the kind that we had enjoyed. It is possible to cruise for a year on a bigger vessel with all the seamanship and navigation carried out by paid-hands, without the passengers ever learning more than may be already known of the sea and the ways of ships. But to rely on your own resources, however, and to do every item of the mixed duties of cooking, navigation, seamanship, and catering, you are compelled to keep learning all the time. Every man will extol his own particular sport to the exclusion of all others, but when all the pros and cons have been weighed, it will still be found that in

this yachting game not merely is there relaxation from the ordinary routine which only monotonises life, but there is health to the body and the widest scope for mental and physical activity. Every time you get under weigh there is opportunity for quick but not hasty judgment. Passing other craft, estimating the distance that will clear you, picking up moorings, cheating wind and tide, and a dozen other chances, keep your mind on the alert and quicken your powers of decision. At the same time you are in the open sea air and adding to your health the while; you are arrived right back in the bosom of Nature, away from artificialities and shams. In the science and art of the sea game, whether played in big ships or little yachts, it is much the same: there is never any finality, and the more you learn, the more you fathom your own ignorance. From a more personal point of view the effects on character which instil and deepen a man's physical and moral courage, his spirit of self-reliance, patience, and unselfishness in trying times cannot be lightly disregarded. He learns to be ready for most things and to be surprised at nothing; but all the time whilst playing he is doing something really serious, something which men of all nations have done in earnest for war or for trade from the time of the Egyptians and earlier down to the present day. The professional sailor, the genuine fisherman, even the deep-sea mariner, does not laugh you to scorn though you have come round in your little bit of a ship. In actual experience he respects you the more for relying on your own powers and trusting yourself to the sea. He is willing to yarn with you, and let you into no end of good tips regarding ships and the sea. There are, of course, the customary shore-sharks to be avoided everywhere, but as a rule, when he sees you arrive in port and round-to, the sailor-man is ready to be your friend, where as had you come ashore from a palatial yacht with a brass-bound crew aboard he would shut down "like a clam."

In port there is always plenty to do on board keeping the "house" clean and making continual improvements in gear and stowage, apart altogether from any attractions of interest ashore. At sea there is not, as many often imagine, a dull moment. Passing craft, a good look-out, watching the changing conditions of wind and tide, calculating distances, working out bearings, and fifty other duties keep your eyes busy all the day and night. You are travelling round the extremities of your mother-land without encumbrance, and with all your luggage and conveniences aboard. You are seeing your country as it can never be seen from the shore, and getting deeper into the heart of things. Under ordinary circumstances it is unlikely, for instance, that you would ever find yourself one day in St. Just, and a few days later in Lulworth, where no railway can dump its noisy crowd of Philistines to spoil natural peace and beauty. There is of course a little danger now and again, but that only accentuates the excitement, and brings

out half-developed virtues to receive their tonic.

Perhaps the present generation, at any rate, will never agree as to the definition of the ideal cruiser. To some extent it will always be modified by personal preferences, questions of size and of accommodation. But with regard to the vexed question as to whether a yacht should carry the whole of her ballast externally or internally, one can only make reply that as in other respects the yacht is a compromise, so here the same principle holds good. The vessel with a lead mine on her keel has undoubtedly certain advantages, but they do not lie in the direction of comfort, if of speed. When the motion of the sea swings the boat from side to side, the fact of the weight being at the lowest extremity must obviously cause her momentum to resemble that of the pendulum. The Bristol Channel pilot craft have part of the ballast on the keel and part inside, so as to make the swing of the pendulum as small as possible. When *Vivette* was in the motion of the Channel off Portland Bill, for instance, we were glad that we had so much of our ballast inside, for a few hours of balancing yourself on a lively little craft detract from your endurance when you can least afford to allow it. Another compromise that has to be made on behalf of the cruiser as opposed to the racing craft is the relation which speed must bear to comfort. It is impossible to have it both ways, and if your intention is to live as well as sail, to be independent of the shore, going from port to port instead of running out and home for day-sails, you soon decide that comfort is worth sacrificing something of speed. What "coal endurance" is in the mind of the naval man, physical endurance is to the yachtsman. There are limits, and to pass beyond these means encountering unnecessary risk, which is rather folly than bravery.

With regard to the question of rig, there is something to be said for the ketch and something for the yawl; but to split up the area of your canvas and increase the amount of gear on board is hardly necessary, unless the size of your ship exceeds ten tons. Sloops may be all very well for home-sailing, but, for preference, in doing passages I would not exchange for the cutter rig. The convenience of being able to stow the stay-sail when coming to anchor, and the advantage of always having an additional head-sail in case anything carries away forward, cannot be dismissed as of no value.

If it is true that an army "marches on its stomach," so it is equally certain that the remark is applicable in the case of sailing. To neglect the domestic arrangements of cooking is to decrease the efficiency of the crew. We made it a practice of dining on board and cooking everything that we wanted. Apart altogether from the increased expense of having meals at an hotel when ashore, there is the added regret of having sacrificed one's independence. At the same time it is essential to insist on regularity of feeding times, and to pay proper

attention to cooking. With a good hot meal inside them, your crew will eagerly face an uphill fight, when, fasting, they would have gone about the work with the deepest pessimism. At least two hot meals a day was our rule, and we kept fit and strong, with the exception of the experience off Portland, where lack of sleep had fatigued us so much as to take away the desire for food. Good, fresh meat taken aboard at every port, plenty of fruit and vegetables, and lime-juice for health's sake, make a sure foundation for the cruisingman's wants. The tinned things can be kept for emergencies, and not touched except under those unlooked-for conditions. We cooked dinner usually with the boilerette. The operation was simplicity itself. The meat was cut up into small pieces, and with tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, and turnips was put in together to stew. It required no watching, and could not burn. And here let it be emphasised, that the simpler the food when cruising the better it is for one's health and the work to be carried out. To live and eat as you would on shore is to make a great mistake. You are out in the hot sun or biting wind, with a keen appetite that needs no tempting. What you want is not so much food that is pleasant to the palate, as substantial sustenance to maintain your strength. As you come down and begin your life aboard after being cooped up in town, the change of life is so sudden, that for a day or two you frequently feel out of sorts. For this reason we usually spent at least a day simply living aboard, until we had become acclimatised to the new surroundings.

We carried for most of the cruise a drogue or sea-anchor on board in case we ever got caught in really bad weather and had to ride it out. Happily, however, we never had occasion to use it except for a different purpose in port, when the yacht was lying to her anchor and the wind was against tide. By allowing the drogue to tow astern, as long as ever the tide was strong enough, the little ship was prevented from careering about the anchorage and from any possibility of tripping her anchor. When one hears the accounts of Captain Slocum's voyage round the world in a small yacht single-handed, or of Captain Voss's equally marvellous wanderings in the *Tilikum*, one hesitates so much as to mention the rising of a wave or the puffing of the wind. Whereas we had only cruised up and down the English Channel, these two intrepid mariners had roamed over oceans, doing their navigating and cooking with as much ease as we in the *Vivette*. But it is pertinent to draw attention to the fact that whereas in traversing oceans and big seas the waves are long and steady, yet coasting, as we were, round headlands and bays, where the tides are strong and races and overfalls busy, where the nasty short seas cause greater anxiety than the waves farther out, being tossed about instead of feeling the rhythmic swell of the deep sea, was ever a source of some anxiety. If it comes on to blow in the open you can lower everything and

ride to your drogue until the weather moderates. You have everywhere plenty of sea-room, and the amount of drift which the vessel makes from her proper course can be reckoned up near enough. But supposing you find yourself caught in a gale in the Channel when on a coasting trip you are less happily situated. You may ride more or less comfortably to your sea-anchor, but the chances are that the SW. wind is blowing you nearer and nearer to the shore, with the prospect of losing your ship and your life as well. Instead of being able to go below and turn in, knowing that the vessel will be all right without you, it is essential that you keep on the *qui vive* all the time. The English Channel, being the highway not merely of most of the British commerce, but the road that leads to the Baltic and German Ocean, is full of traffic. At all times of the day and night some ship is coming along, and at night your light might not be easily visible in the trough of the waves to the steamer thrashing ahead determined to be in port punctually at all costs.

There was one other consideration which in the presence of calms could not help being called attention to during our cruise. Should the ideal cruiser have also fitted an auxiliary motor? There were many times when the wind fell and the tide turned against us that we longed for this luxury, but on the whole I am not sure that we really desired it. In time it will no doubt be found as the rule rather than the exception on a yacht, but at any rate for small craft three recent and historic tragedies to yachts and life have proved that the danger from fire at sea is far too great to counterbalance the convenience offered. I believe I am right in saying that Lloyd's now decline to insure motor-yachts at any price, so the time for the universal adoption of this assistant means of propulsion would seem to be not yet, though approaching no doubt.

It was still early August, and there were plenty of nice little ports within reach to cruise into, or we could remain at anchor and loaf in the dinghy, as one willed. But the summer would soon be at an end, and already the days were beginning to shorten visibly. Perhaps a few sails outside and back again for the night would suffice before *Vivette* and her crew went into winter quarters, until at the summons of spring and the return of the long warm days the sea would find us coming out to seek once more some of those quaint little anchorages which to have seen is to make you long most ardently to revisit, not once but a thousand times. For, after a time, civilisation on shore begins to pall, and your prehistoric man begins to reassert himself. You

# Note

The available source of this e-book ends abruptly, see:

<https://archive.org/details/downchannelinviv00chat/page/216>

The last pages are obviously missing.

The compiler regrets the inconvenience.

